THEORIE DES KRIEGES

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Theory of War

Clausewitz – Marx – Engels – Lenin

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Preface

The great war-theoretical drafts presented and discussed here provide, when viewed in their totality, a conceptual framework that is comprehensive and flexible enough to make the main aspects of the phenomenon of war comprehensible in its historical multidimensionality. Clausewitz's anthropological and cultural-philosophical grounding of war theory has hitherto been scarcely perceived, yet it constitutes a theoretical achievement of lasting value and deserves to be reckoned among the significant political conceptions in the tradition of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes; not only does it offer the key to understanding the central concepts intended to illuminate the essence of war, but it also harmonizes perfectly with the strategic and tactical analyses. That which we today call socio-historical and sociological observation exists in Clausewitz only indirectly, namely in his cultural-philosophical views or in his rather brief expositions on the historical conditionality of the various forms of war. It is precisely in this observation, which necessarily had to come up short in Clausewitz, that the strongest side of the war-theoretical efforts of Marx and Engels lies; their excellent historical sense enabled them, on the basis of not yet particularly extensive material, to ask the decisive questions relating to the function of war and the army at the major and minor turning points of history; the scale of their valuable insights and observations extends from the theory of history to military sociology. The inclusion of Lenin's war theory in our investigation was, in turn, obvious given its double reference to the fathers of historical materialism and to Clausewitz. In particular, the analysis of Lenin's understanding of Clausewitz presupposes a correct understanding of Clausewitz, and therefore the corresponding sections of this work belong together not only in terms of intellectual history but also logically.

The Excursuses intend to clarify to what extent the elaborated conceptual framework is fruitful for the theoretical grasping of concrete war phenomena or of modern strategic concepts. Clausewitz not only said decisive things regarding the relationship of Civil and Military (even if his view on this deviates considerably from that which is generally ascribed to him), but also, through the concept of *friction*, provided a red thread that holds out the prospect of a way out of the confusion prevailing over terms such as "war of annihilation," "total war," and "nuclear war."[1] The third Excursus reminds one of the inherent difficulties of the materialist conception of history with the phenomena of power and violence — difficulties which are also brought up on the occasion of the statements by Marx and Engels regarding this. And finally, the investigation of the Soviet military doctrine makes clear how alive the war-theoretical and strategic stream of thought can still be that feeds from the sources of Clausewitz, Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Military authors such as Mao Tse-tung had to be disregarded here, as they present no original theory of war, but write only on strategy and tactics in guerilla war. Incidentally, the reasons are explained why a military-theoretical derivation of the partisan wars of our century

from the war theories of the four protagonists of this book is, contrary to a common opinion, false.

For the satisfactory exploration of the named war-theoretical themes, it proved necessary to go into such widely separated problems as the meaning and relationship of power and violence, the attempts at the periodization of history, the development of European military theory in the period 1870 to 1914, the character of the two World Wars, or the position of the military within the ruling Soviet elite. General political theory, history, and sociology can only be separated from one another in the imagination or practice of one-sidedly educated political scientists, historians, and sociologists — but not in the treatment of important complexes of issues. That everything hangs together with everything and that the ultimate or most general questions only have substance in concrete historical situations is, admittedly, an insight that can lead either to a deeper understanding or indeed sow confusion. The knowledgeable reader will judge which of these two possibilities has been realized in the present book.

I have to thank my friend Dr. F. Horst, who took on the trouble of going through the text and making it more readable through his remarks.

P. K.

I. Clausewitz

1. Preliminary Remark

Clausewitz, the historically thinking and descriptively proceeding war theorist, cannot be logically and flawlessly appealed to by any party – neither a bellicose nor a pacifist one, neither a civil-liberal nor a nationalist or militarist one. For the highly peculiar and idiosyncratic Prussian general fundamentally only established in his major work that wars take place and that they can assume the most diverse forms; his long-standing effort was devoted to the explanation of these facts, but he neither recommended or envisaged the abolition of wars nor gave the advice to seek and wage war at the first opportunity; and he also did not consider extreme intensity or, conversely, the least possible effort in war as unconditionally desirable ends in themselves. Now, however, a classic work always constitutes a coveted ally, even or especially in the case where an enemy has already seized it. Thus, Clausewitz initially served to provide the strengthened self-confidence of the German General Staff after 1871 with a higher military-theoretical and historical legitimation, which, however, remained rather vague in content; the deeper approach of Clausewitz's thought was not perceived, while the partly considerable strategic and tactical discussions to which learned German military men devoted themselves following Clausewitz ran counter to the mentioned legitimation concern at least insofar as they, for the most part and sometimes even in explicit dissociation from Clausewitz himself, represented the then prevailing view of the unconditional primacy of the offensive. It should be recalled that this same primacy of the offensive was at the same time also military-theoretical orthodoxy in France, where an authoritative group of military men pursued and promoted the study of German military theorists in the expectation of finding in these texts the secret of the German victory of 1871 and simultaneously the recipe for a successful revenge; then Clausewitz experienced his first great moment in the land of Foch.[1] After the First World War, understandably, the readiness decreased considerably to identify with Germans, even if only in the theoretical field, and partly under the influence of the idea of militaristic-bloodthirsty Prussianism already current in the West, many a military writer blamed Clausewitz's theories for the preceding slaughter.[2]

The use that was occasionally made of Clausewitz's name in National Socialist propaganda seemed to confirm this interpretation.[3] All the more noteworthy is the fact, hitherto not duly appreciated, that the first more or less deepened liberal interpretation of Clausewitz, according to which the primacy of politics must ultimately amount to a command of moderation, was worked out by German military and civilian opponents of National Socialism, who thereby

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[1] On the strategic tendencies prevailing at that time in Germany and France see below Excursus B.
[2] Liddell Hart, *The Ghost*, 104, cf. 140 ff., 118 ff., esp. 123 f., 125. Even after the Second World War, the English author maintained this position, see his *Strategie*, 415 ff. Similar Fuller, *Die entartete Kunst*, 64 ff.
[3] See e.g. Metzsch, *Zeitgemäße Gedanken*; Hierl, *Grundlagen*, 4 f., 8 ff.

partly linked up with the argumentative strategy already developed during the First World War of criticizing the offensive extremism of the Supreme Army Command with reference to the correctly understood Clausewitz.[4] To summon the war theorist *par excellence* against the warmongers was indeed a clever undertaking, which, however, under the given circumstances had to remain without practical effect. The situation proved more favorable for the dissemination of the liberal Clausewitz interpretation after the Second World War, initially, of course, within a historical schema that affirmed the victor ideology of the "German special path" at least insofar as the German catastrophe was traced back here to an increasing militarization of politics and political objectives; Clausewitz is said to have still stood at the beginning of this path as the great warner.[5] From this point of view, Clausewitz could become socially acceptable among enlightened Anglo-Saxons and Frenchmen, while at the same time he was also certified as progressive in the socialist camp, albeit with certain reservations.[6]

The Clausewitz thus rediscovered and fundamentally positively assessed was now, as was to be expected, read in the light of the great questions raised by the strategic debate of the last decades. Despite all approaches to an all-round interpretation of his thinking and despite all progress in Clausewitz philology, it cannot be overlooked that even the most recent hermeneutic attempts stand under the sign of the old, polemically-normativistically conceived questions, as they have meanwhile been reformulated in the shadow of nuclear war or in the flames of the global civil war: how can "reasonable" politics limit or banish war? How can the military be tamed by the civil government for the purpose of effectively securing peace? It is undoubtedly correct and incidentally unavoidable that the Clausewitz exegeses concentrate primarily on the problem of the relationships between war and politics; but if this problem is investigated from the perspective of the mentioned questions, which for the theorist Clausewitz himself concerned rather *marginalia*, then it loses its theoretical – i.e., anthropological, cultural-philosophical, and historical – depth. Within the depicted intellectual-historical constellation, the liberal Clausewitz interpretation had to prevail in the West, and it represents today the only conversational partner to be taken seriously; for there have hardly been analogous bellicose or militaristic interpretations, and what was offered with this intention in past times constituted in reality only nationalist rhetoric that adorned itself with Clausewitz citations.

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[4] Beck, *Die Lehre* (Comparison of Clausewitz and Ludendorff); Rothfels, *Clausewitz* (arguments are made against Liddell Hart and other Anglo-Saxon authors); Ritter, *Die Lehre*.

[5] Authoritatively Ritter, *Staatskunst*, I, 76 ff. This view was later repeated or varied in several, mostly superficial works, originating either from left-wing representatives of the victor ideology of the "German special path" or from (former) nationalists of the Right, who (tacitly) miss the proper political sense of proportion in Hitler's politics for achieving per se welcome Greater German goals.

[6] See on this Excursus D.

2. "Pure" and "real" war in anthropological and cultural-philosophical perspective

The implication-rich *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* [basic error] of the prevailing Clausewitz interpretation consists in the thesis that the concept of war established at the beginning of the main work is something ideal and unreal, an ideal type lying outside of reality, a purely theoretical idea or a fiction.[7] Since now in this concept the factor "violence" stands in the foreground, the abstract character of violence itself is concluded from the alleged abstractness of the concept, and the pair of concepts "abstract war – blind violence" is opposed by the coupling of real war and rational, i.e., moderate political action. In other words: since undiluted violence seems by definition to be bound to abstraction, nothing remains for the total area of reality, which according to Clausewitz is actually the area of politics, other than moderate action; finally, this action is related to certain civil, far-sighted, responsible, etc. carriers, whose authoritative position during the conduct of war is presented as a command that is supposed to result from the theoretical insight into the political character of war. In contrast, we will demonstrate in the following that Clausewitz's concept of war points to no abstract entity, no *ens rationis*, but contains a heightened reality which, precisely in this its heightening, can only be grasped by abstracting from the remaining reality; that the first and decisive moderation of the most extreme, so to speak conceptually pure violence is to be traced back to factors that have not the slightest thing to do with the mode of action and the intentions of any civil or military authority, but goes back to anthropological and cultural constants whose effect is independent of the volition and knowledge of governments and subjects; and that already for these reasons no normative statements are appropriate here: Clausewitz speaks of maxims of action, albeit again not with normative-moral intention, only on a theoretically subordinate level, where politics in the sense of subjective modes of action and intentions comes into play and the contrast between war of annihilation and limited war is thematized.

By defining war as an "act of violence to compel the opponent to fulfill our will,"[8] Clausewitz considers exclusively existential magnitudes (violence, opponent, will, compulsion), which in their constancy can therefore be thought independently of any specific society, culture, or politics because they are present in all of them in one way or another. Whenever Clausewitz speaks of war, he never loses sight of the elementary existential constellation and confrontation: the "raw element,"[9] the "hatred" and the "enmity," which are to be regarded "like a blind drive,"[10]

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[7] In chronological order: Rothfels, *Clausewitz*, 273; Kessel, *Genesis*, 410; Ritter, *Staatskunst*, I, 83; Weil, *Guerre*, 298; Schmitt, *Clausewitz*, 251; Aron, *Penser la guerre*, I, 121.
[8] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 2 = 191 f.
[9] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 192 and III, § 16 = 410.
[10] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 28 = 213.

the "unbound element of enmity,"[11] the "mere principle of enmity,"[12] the "actual enmity,"[13] the "settlement of enmity, of hatred"[14] – this constitutes the "actual principle of war."[15] Even in the newer wars of large scale, which do not spring from the "hatred of the individual against the individual enemy" and in which therefore a transformation of the "hostile feeling into hostile intention" takes place, it "never goes without such an activity of the mind"; violence, retribution, and revenge call one another forth, and the circle of their efficacy expands to the extent that they combine with feelings such as "ambition, thirst for power, enthusiasm of every kind etc." This is all "human, or also animal, if one will, but it is so," Clausewitz remarks dryly about it.[16] However impersonal the motives of wars and however capable of transformation or sublimation the primal feelings of enmity may (have become) be – the voice of raw, naked nature can never be silenced in war. The *struggle* as immediate, irreducible existential confrontation, as we encounter it in the "wrestling of two people with bare hands,"[17] forms the common origin and denominator of all phenomena connected with war, it is, in Clausewitz's words, "alone the effective principle in the manifold activity that one calls war in the wider meaning."[18] It is true that because of the complexity of a war between "civilized peoples" its indispensable existential basis or source is buried, as it were, and no longer leaps to the eye in the self-evidence of its presence. And yet its effect extends into the most remote ramifications of the war phenomenon. Even if the elementary desire of the combatants to simply fall upon the enemy and cut him down with their own hands can no longer act as an independent factor in its purity under the conditions of a modern complicated war, but must be brought into connection with all sorts of "political purposes and conditions" and thus enters into a "subordinate relationship," it nevertheless does not cease because of that to be the "nerve" that "lends movement to the higher will."[19] That it is henceforth "only" this nerve certainly does not mean it could fail to appear in the event of war. This becomes most clear in the central systematic use Clausewitz makes of the concept of *combat* in the exposition of tactics and strategy,[20] whereby he again does not fail to grasp combat itself in its existential core, namely to "divest" it of all "modifications" under which it appears depending on the various circumstances of its origin

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[11] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 991.
[12] *Op. cit.*, VIII, § 2 = 952.
[13] *Op. cit.*, VI, § 8 = 659.
[14] *Op. cit.*, IV, 11 = 468.
[15] *Feldzug des Herzogs v. Braunschweig*, § 1 *Werke*, X, 262.
[16] *Vom Kriege*, II, 2 = 285 f.
[17] *Op. cit.*, II, 1 = 269.
[18] *Op. cit.*
[19] *Op. cit.*, IV, 8 = 449.
[20] See below Section 3, p. 44 ff.

and development, in order thereby to arrive at the finding that then "only the naked concept of combat, i.e., a formless struggle" remains.[21]

When Clausewitz makes the existential source and simultaneously component of war the systematic starting point of his war theory, he emphasizes something that is in his eyes admittedly an implication-rich banality only because the elementary truth contained in this banality escaped many a war theorist of his time, just as it is interpreted away or trivialized today by many a Clausewitz commentator. The tracking down of the above-mentioned existential magnitudes preferably in the state of chemical purity simply states that without them, in short without enmity, no war is conceivable and possible. Everything else – organization, armament, etc. – can be thought away from war as existential confrontation, only enmity cannot. A second prerequisite is added, however: enmity must assume an extent at which it does not shrink from the use of extreme violence – and violence reaches its highest intensity with killing, a further increase is impossible. Without killing out of enmity there is no war (although, of course, private killing out of private enmity does not yet make a war). Clausewitz's explanation that a principle of moderation could never be introduced into the "philosophy of war" (i.e., into the comprehension of war independent of its respective forms of appearance) without committing an absurdity[22] expresses merely the self-evidence that where no enmity and no extreme violence culminating in killing are present, one also may not speak of war. The lack of a moderation in war is therefore not at all due to the character of the war, thus to the fact that the war is a war of annihilation and not a limited war – enough that war takes place. For violence reaches its extreme even in a (very) limited war, at the moment namely in which an individual warrior kills his enemy standing opposite him. Not the extent of violence is decisive on this level of theory, but only its intensity interests, as it culminates in killing, even if only of an individual. What changes from war to war is not the degree of intensity of violence, which anyway cannot go beyond killing, but its concentrated and gapless use, i.e., the ability or readiness of the belligerents to do nothing else during wartime than use extreme violence. Two hate-filled individual existences or smaller groups can obviously do this, but the difficulties for this grow with the size of the army and of the war, as we will explain shortly. It is to be held fast in any case already now that moderation *in war* does not amount to stopping before the highest steps of the scale of violence, but to a more or less short, more or less discontinuous dwelling on them. Without the extreme violence of killing there is no war. And just as this culmination of violence is present also in moderate or limited war, so too every real war, quite independently of its intensity, includes the *concept* of war in itself, it is thus not separated from this by that gap which is supposed to separate the merely ideal from the real.

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[21] *Vom Kriege*, III, 8 = 374.
[22] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 193.

The definition of war is therefore not the opposite of its reality, but only the conceptual separation and condensation of the existential factors that call it forth and simultaneously constitute its core. Clausewitz himself introduces his definition of war with the explanation that he wants to begin "with a look at the essence of the whole," thus penetrate immediately into an area that lies deeper than the accidents of the historical reality of wars, and he adds that here more than anywhere "with the part the whole must always be thought at the same time,"[23] which obviously means that the whole (or the essence) is really present in every part (i.e., in every historical form of appearance), is inseparable from it. Clausewitz is not thinking here of a fiction or abstraction in the sense of a mere *ens rationis*. What can he mean, then, when he speaks of "abstraction" and of "abstract" or "ideal" war?[24] First of all, it is certainly to be recalled that he by no means uses these terms exclusively or preferentially, but uses them in parallel with others, equivalent ones, such as "mere," "pure," "strict," or "original concept of war."[25] Already in his tentative and fluctuating terminology, the intention makes itself felt to summarize in his concept of war certain elements specific to the reality of war in their purity and irreducibility. In a pure state, however, these elements can only be grasped if one disregards, i.e., abstracts from, other elements that are just as real and necessarily mix with the former in the womb of an all-encompassing reality. The definition of war is, in other words, abstract because it arises through separation, through an abstraction process, and not perhaps because it refers to something abstract in itself, unless we wanted to assume that everything real is abstract in its separation from the remaining reality; then, however, a conceptual grasp of socio-political reality that would not consider war as a real magnitude in previous history would be just as abstract as the pure concept of war. Turned differently: the abstraction in the concept of war consists in the fact that on the methodologically self-evident search for the specific of war, initially those factors are bracketed out which prevent an eternalization and omnipresence of enmity and extreme violence, thus of the specific characteristics of war – just as war for its part does not allow the undisturbed and uninterrupted predominance of those factors in socio-political life – and not perhaps in the fact that enmity and the extreme violence resulting from it would represent mere fictions. Were they such, then no real obstacles would be required for their inhibition. Their abstractness in the framework of the definition of war therefore does not concern their ontological constitution, but the possibility of their undiluted effect within complex social structures: for abstraction was made precisely from the factors that stand in the

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[23] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 1 = 191.

[24] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 6 = 196; I, 2 = 216; I, 1, § 10 = 199.

[25] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, §§ 4-6 = 195 and I, 2 = 216; I, 2 = 214; I, 2 = 230; I, 2 = 216. The special reality content of the term "original concept" will be discussed immediately below in this section; the term "absolute war" will only be explained in Section 4, since it (despite the hermeneutically fatal confusion that prevails in research regarding this highly important point) by no means coincides with the definition of war as Clausewitz establishes it in the final phase of his path of thought (see esp. p. 58).

way of such an effect. As the specifically war-relevant real factors are now discovered through abstraction and the abstraction unveils the existential core of the war phenomenon, there arises before our eyes not a fiction, but an ideal-typically grasped "heightened reality," to remind us of M. Weber. The ideal type here truly summarizes the actual reality of war, while what is commonly called "reality of war" forms nothing other than the reality of the various wars in their uniqueness. If we remain aware of this and do not fall for the deception suggested by language, then we will also have to refrain from considering the ideal type as fiction and the disparate forms of appearance of war as "the" reality; we will, in other words, realize that reality can only be grasped in ideal-typical abstractness, if at all.

The actual theoretical problem lies therefore not in opposing reality to a conceptual fiction, but rather in naming the *real* factors which, although they neither extinguish nor alleviate enmity and extreme violence, certainly do not let them become continuous and all-encompassing. It is a matter, in other words, of explaining the reasons that force a mixing of different levels of one and the same human and historical-social reality with one another, whereby it must be noted that starting from the ideality or from the concept of war is not due to its lesser reality content, but simply to the fact that the theme of the work is war; if its theme were peace, for example, the author, if he wanted to proceed methodically in the same way, would have had to start from the ideality or from the concept of peace, in order to subsequently explain why peace could not hitherto be continuous and all-encompassing. Precisely the reality content of the "abstract" or "pure" concept of war is vividly called to mind when Clausewitz also calls it the *original* one, by which he means that in the first phases of human history, i.e., among the "raw peoples," actual warfare and concept of war (continuous and all-encompassing use of extreme violence until the destruction of the enemy) would have been identical. The fundamental and hitherto scarcely noticed role that the (formalized) contrast between the warfare of "raw" and of "civilized" peoples plays in Clausewitz's syllogistics[26] leaves no doubt that the transition from abstract or pure war to real wars may not be thought of as one from the realm of the fictitious-ideal to the realm of the real, but rather as a historically-culturally conditioned transition from human constellations in which an absolute concentration of the entire existential and other potential on enmity and extreme violence is possible (so, for example, in the wrestling of two enemies with

[26] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 192 f.; I, 1, § 23 = 209; I, 3 = 232; IV, 3 = 422. This contrast was not unfamiliar in the literature of the time, and Decken, for example, referred to it to justify his advocacy for cabinet war and against people's war: modern people's war, he opined, amounts to a return to barbaric conditions, when all men capable of bearing arms took part in the war and the outcome of the war was decided by one or at most a few battles; this concentration and intensity of the act of war came to an end with advancing culture (*Betrachtungen*, esp. 24, 30 f., 32, 37). It should be added here that the long debate of the 18th and early 19th centuries about the connection between the warlike function and the social position of the nobility brought about a sensitization of minds with regard to the relationship between socio-historical and military questions.

bare hands or in war between raw peoples), to those in which such a concentration must encounter insurmountable objective obstacles.

In the conditions of "civilized peoples," in the state of culture, there thus occurs that dilution of the existential factors summarized in the pure war concept by other elements, which makes an abstract-ideal-typical grasp of the warlike act henceforth necessary and unavoidable. In doing so, we must of course not forget that the mentioned factors continue to provide the "nerve" of war in culture as well and that without them wars would be unthinkable at all. Their effect, however, undergoes profound changes henceforth, and correspondingly the physiognomy of war changes, not of course because its essence, as it is grasped in its definition, changes fundamentally, but rather because this its essence cannot manifest itself continuously in the whole area and in all aspects of the ongoing armed conflicts. The main characteristic of culture is the increasing differentiation and complexity of the "social union," so that under the influence of the factors incessantly arising, acting against or with one another, fluctuating or stable, subjective or objective, which form the cultural whole, keep it in motion and constantly redefine it, there must come about an inhibition, diversion, fragmentation, or partial covering and disguising of that which constitutes war in its conceptual purity. The "partition" that prevents "the total discharge" lies henceforth in the "large number of things, forces, conditions that war touches in state life." Even if an "intelligence," i.e., a willing person, group, or authority, were capable and willing not to let itself be confused in its pure war intention by any of these obstacles, the differentiating and differentiated culture has nevertheless produced a quantity of other and different intelligences in the state that do not want or cannot do the like, so that the "inertia of the whole mass"[27] cannot be overcome in the end effect. In this way the "composite conditions" and forms of war between civilized peoples and "that so composite activity" as a war between civilized peoples is take shape,[28] whereby the simple, definitional nature of war is indeed neither extinguished nor paralyzed, but is arched over by the henceforth "composite and changeable nature of war."[29]

In what does the difference in warfare in the "raw" and in the "civilized" state of culture now consist? While in the "simple conditions of savage peoples" state and military power are a unity and therefore war forms a single great combat, "our wars" consist of several combats, whereby this "falling apart of the activity into so many individual actions" has its reason in the "great manifoldness of conditions from which war proceeds with us"; also the political purpose is not uniform here (obviously because of the simultaneous presence of several "intelligences" in the state), and even if it were, the action for its attainment would again have to be divided into

[27] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, § 2 = 953.
[28] *Feldzüge von 1799*, § 21 *Werke*, V, 221.
[29] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 214.

several.[30] Decisive in Clausewitz's eyes is thus the objectively conditioned inability of a "civilized" people to realize in the literal sense what has been called somewhat abusively *total mobilization* in our century, for the purpose of destruction of the enemy in a single warlike act; the duel of hate-filled existences can indeed be repeated *in magno* among savage peoples, but not to that extent which has meanwhile become necessary due to the size of "our" peoples, states, and armies. Clausewitz designates the command of a truly total and extreme effort in war as a "logical dream,"[31] and means by that its practical infeasibility in a cultural world that can no longer possess that primitive monolithic closedness which must be presupposed for the realization of the giant uninterrupted duel of two peoples-warriors; for culture multiplies forces not only, but also fragments them – if it does not rest on weakness and generate weakness (see below); the possible result of the striving for a total mobilization in the mentioned sense would therefore be under the given historical and social circumstances a "useless expenditure of force."[32] Also the other reasons that according to Clausewitz effect the deviation of real war from its pure concept can be derived from the indirect or direct influence of the state of culture. If war does not arise suddenly,[33] but the hostile intentions of both sides have already been recognizable for some time, this is due to the presence of a somewhat organized society of nations whose members traffic with one another politically or otherwise and have developed a code of understanding, even if only a symbolic one; and if war no longer consists of a single blow,[34] this is because here more or less organized and prepared opponents fight one another, who can plan and act long-term. In this ceaseless calculating and looking ahead that culture requires or presupposes, however, such intellectual forces are at work which cannot be readily derived from the existential core of war, i.e., from enmity and violence. This points in turn to a dichotomy in culture and in man, the discussion of which will lead us to the core point of Clausewitz's anthropology and cultural philosophy.

Let us first hold fast the most important result of the preceding analysis. In the transition from pure to real war, politics as a subjective striving for moderation of a government or another authoritative instance does not come into consideration at all; solely decisive here is the confrontation of two types of society, the "raw" and the "civilized," and one may speak of politics only if the "social union" is meant by it. 'Politics' then means the entire social life of civilized peoples and politically waged war is every war between precisely such peoples. On this level of theory, the contrast between war of annihilation and limited war is thus not yet thematized, which is of importance only in the state of culture and in which politics in the sense

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[30] *Op. cit.*, IV, 3 = 422.
[31] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 6 = 196.
[32] *Op. cit.*
[33] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 7 = 196 f.
[34] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 8 = 197 f.

of subjective intentions and purposes could possibly play a certain role.[35] Having now avoided the error as common as it is fatal of confusing the contrast of pure and real war with that between war of annihilation and limited war, we must of course ask the question, what then causes the transition from pure to real war, if the reason for it cannot be a subjective philanthropic striving for moderation. Clausewitz's answer to this question is an anthropological one and runs briefly thus: man is so constituted that he cannot renounce extreme violence, i.e., killing, but simultaneously cannot live with it permanently. The orientation framework of the anthropological considerations and findings of Clausewitz remains therefore that "dichotomy which is founded in man himself, and which the philosophical understanding therefore cannot solve."[36] Here, however, it is not a matter of that contrast between normatively aligned reason and dark drives that stood at the center of traditional moral philosophy. A contrast understood in this way is already no theme for Clausewitz because man according to his view always lets himself be guided and driven by feelings. "The strongest occasion for action man always gets through feelings";[37] he is accustomed "in great and small to act more according to individual prevailing ideas and feelings than according to strict logical sequence."[38] The mentioned unresolvable dichotomy in man can thus only result from the presence of two opposite (groups of) feelings in his psyche. And indeed: on the one hand man is the carrier of the "mere principle of enmity,"[39] and there stir besides in his breast also many other feelings that can promote the desire to fight, such as "ambition, thirst for power, enthusiasm of every kind etc.";[40] on the other hand his "imperfect organization"[41] shows itself in his "natural limitation and weakness,"[42] in the "whole inconsistency, lack of clarity, and timidness of the human spirit,"[43] in his "imperfect insight and judgment"[44] as well as in his "shying away from overly great exertions,"[45] in the "natural timidity and irresoluteness of the human spirit," in the "shying away from danger and responsibility"[46] and in the "weakness" which befalls "the by nature fearful man"[47] at "every great decision."[48] Two kinds of human properties thus stand in the way, on the whole, of a completely active

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[35] See below Section 5, esp. p. 74 ff.
[36] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, § 6B = 990.
[37] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 = 252.
[38] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 2 = 953.
[39] *Op. cit.*, VIII, § 2 = 952.
[40] *Op. cit.*, II, 2 = 286; cf. I, 3 = 239 ("the soul's thirst for glory and honor as the actual breath of life").
[41] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 7 = 197.
[42] *Op. cit.*, VIII, § 6A = 988.
[43] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 2 = 954.
[44] *Op. cit.*, III, 16 = 408.
[45] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 8 = 199.
[46] *Op. cit.*, III, 16 = 408.
[47] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 992.
[48] *Op. cit.*, IV, § 11 = 469.

unfolding of enmity and the desire to fight connected with it, the "need for combat":[49] intellectual limitation and fear.

The fundamental importance of the anthropological factor for war theory became conscious to Clausewitz himself in the later phase of his thought development also in systematic respect. "Theory should also consider the human," he wrote at that time,[50] and he repeated this programmatic demand in his last posthumous note to the main work.[51] Already in the beginnings of his theoretical career, however, he had to argue anthropologically very often, since he appeared as is well known as an advocate of the view also later repeatedly reaffirmed that the art of war has to do with "living and with moral forces":[52] no other than man is however the carrier of these forces and therefore here the question of his constitution must move into the foreground. Thus the young Clausewitz grounds his aversion to "waiting for advantageous conjunctures from time" with the argument that the "natural timidity" of ordinary people in great undertakings finds a pretext in it to undertake nothing.[53] And against Bülow's "pure strategy" he proposes the term "general strategy," since, as he opines, principles can be stated in it "which are founded on no less general circumstances, such as e.g. on the general character of man."[54] Also in the years of the Prussian catastrophe, when he searched far and wide for means and ways to mobilize souls against the enemy, he often thought about the dichotomy in human nature, thus about the "sluggish animal" in it, which lets chains be put on it "cowardly and timidly," and at the same time about the feelings of "hatred and revenge... which one has expected very wrongly only from religious enthusiasm" and which "in the hours of great danger or misfortune and despair" raise man "above his ordinary existence" and give him courage and energy;[55] nevertheless he was convinced that the great heap stands "in the middle between the extremes of human nature",[56] and that in any case not the understanding, but the "temper" in man decides one way or another: "the one temper-interest is courage, but the other is fear."[57] Finally Clausewitz referred explicitly to anthropological points of view when he set out for the first time to present his thoughts systematically. Here the "fear of an all-decisive verdict" or "stroke of fate" appears as a "natural," thus rooted in man himself feeling, which acts in war no less than in card playing: "for precisely in the traits of the heart and spirit that dwell most

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[49] *Op. cit.*, II, 1 = 269.
[50] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 22 = 208.
[51] *Op. cit.*, 181 ("the political and human side of war").
[52] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 22 = 208; cf. *Feldzüge von 1799*, § 87 *Werke*, VI, 274 ("the influence... which the consideration of man in general and within man his emotional side has in warfare").
[53] *Strategie*, 53.
[54] *Bemerkungen*, 14 f.
[55] Letter to his fiancée of 11.9.1807 and notes from the years 1807/8 and 1809 *Politische Schriften*, 21, 66, 75; *Bekenntnisschrift* (1812) *Schriften*, 739.
[56] *Bemerkungen und Einfälle* (1807) = Rothfels, *C. v. Clausewitz*, Appendix, 224.
[57] *Bekenntnisschrift Schriften*, 707.

hidden within us... human nature is most similar, even under the most disparate conditions." This fear constitutes after all an "almost always more or less effective cause for the weakening of the natural force of this element," i.e., of war, and it makes comprehensible the historical experience that war is generally so "little warlike." Subsequently and with conscious systematic prefacing of this central anthropological insight ("let us go with these disclosures to question history") the development of warfare from the raw peoples to the French Revolution is briefly depicted.[58]

In the light of this anthropology, which groups the manifoldness of the human around the two poles of the explained dichotomy, the hybrid nature of war can be explained: war cannot remain with its pure concept because it must be waged not only out of enmity, but also with fear. Clausewitz summarizes this contradictory situation in felicitous formulations: "But however wild the nature of war is, it nevertheless lies at the chain of human weaknesses, and the contradiction that shows itself here, that man seeks and creates the danger which he nevertheless fears, will surprise no one."[59] Or: "The whole war presupposes human weakness, and against this it is directed."[60] In this way he initially wanted to explain the "standstill in the warlike act" in narrower war-theoretical intention, the causes of which he saw in the "natural timidness and irresoluteness of the human spirit," in the "imperfection of human insight and judgment" and only in third place in the "greater strength of the defense."[61] But after he had realized the rootedness of the war phenomenon in the social whole and had theoretically mastered the distinction between pure and real war, he integrated his explanation of the standstill in war into this broader context,[62] which he in turn underpinned in its totality by the same anthropological conceptions. It is anything but accidental that the reference to the "dichotomy which is founded in man himself" appears precisely in that chapter in which the doctrine of war as a continuation of political traffic with the admixture of other means is systematically presented for the first time, whereby Clausewitz even designates this doctrine as the "unity to which these contradictory elements [which make up the dichotomy in man] combine, by partially neutralizing each other";[63] and just as little accidental is it that where he discusses the distinction between pure and real war, he points precisely to the "deficiencies" of

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[58] *Ueber das Fortschreiten*, esp. 233, 237, 236 f. Through this treatise Clausewitz wanted to "bring light and coherence into strategy", see the letter to Gneisenau of 4.3.1817, *op. cit.*, 240.
[59] *Vom Kriege*, III, 16 = 407.
[60] *Op. cit.*, IV, 10 = 465.
[61] *Op. cit.*, III, 16 = 408 f. Cf. IV, 11 = 469 ("the fear of the thought of the decision given with a single blow" or "this weakness, which affects man in every other great decision", as reason for avoiding the decisive battle) as well as *Feldzug von 1815*, § 12 *Werke*, VIII, 33.
[62] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, §§ 17-18 = 205-6.
[63] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 990.

man as the "moderating principle."[64] Now, however, it is no longer a matter of the character of the standstill in war, but of the character of war *itself* in the life of a "civilized" people, whereby a partly explicit and partly implicit cultural philosophy arises. Accordingly, there is within culture (as objectification of the dichotomous human nature) both a practically sufficient equilibrium of the opposing inclinations in man, so that peace can prevail, as well as tension enough so that war is not excluded, but rather prepared. This mixture of war and peace, which in the state of peace assumes the form of war preparation (or of acting in view of the possibility of a decision by arms), appears in wars between "civilized" peoples in the form of a permeation of warfare with political purposes and of a standstill in the warlike act. It depends on which interests prevail in each case. For the cultural state, the "social union," within which peace and war play themselves out, is formed on the basis of the cooperation of *both* basic aspects of human nature, it thus serves simultaneously *different* human interests.[65] Were there a "social union" that had known no war, we could claim it would rest exclusively on the feelings of fear and weakness (no matter what one would call these). This would of course be a pure culture, as it were a reversal of pure war. But just as war, insofar as it represents violence under the conditions of culture, can no longer be pure, so too culture, insofar as it effects a moderation of pure war, can do this only at the price of its purity, namely by letting war arise and be fought out in its own womb. Pure culture and pure war can be opposed on the conceptual level just as aggressive hatred and fear shrinking from combat are; the theoretical justification of their distinction from one another, however, stands just as little in the way of their real intertwining as the establishment of a dichotomy in man prevents his uniform appearance as person or people.

Now one could think the moderation of pure war in the transition to culture and thus to real wars would be connected with a humanization or moralization lying in the essence of culture itself. Clausewitz would not approve such an interpretation of his thinking if only because he does not see the formation of "understanding" in "civilized" peoples accompanied by a decrease in the "raw element"; the juxtaposition of rawness and culture, of understanding and temper thus loses every moral connotation, and the real possibility of a moral progress is not envisaged at all. The predominance of temper in raw peoples and of understanding in civilized ones, writes Clausewitz, "lies not in the essence of rawness and cultivation itself, but in the circumstances, institutions, etc. accompanying them," for "even the most civilized peoples can

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[64] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 7 = 197.

[65] Cf. the sentence: "...the discord, in which the nature of war stands with other interests of the individual man and of the social association" (VIII, 6B = 990, my emphasis).

burn with passion against one another";[66] inventions like powder and the firearm show that the tendency towards the destruction of the opponent has also factually by no means been disturbed or diverted by increasing cultivation.[67] Culture thus does not mean drying up of the existential source of war, but it brings on the contrary a perfection of the art of war, of the art of killing; since the "civilized peoples" do not lack the "more or less warlike direction and development," so the refinement of the understanding contributes to putting in the place of the "mere warlike spirit" the "warlike genius," who first makes great achievements in war possible: in the "times of a higher cultivation" the peoples famous for their art of war have indeed always acted.[68]

If culture effects no weakening of the warlike inclinations of man, although it does not permit pure war for objective reasons, then the "understanding" or the "intelligence," whose development precisely characterizes the state of "cultivation," cannot have a moral-humane, but only a purposive-rational character. The intelligence is thus supposed to serve those forces of temper which determined the event already before its own refinement, even if the effect of intelligence considerably changes the course and physiognomy of the event. "Combat is a measuring of spiritual and bodily forces by means of the latter,"[69] the fact therefore that one can fight only with tangible means does not mean the spirit would be alien or averse to combat. For Clausewitz intelligence and "raw element" are just as little opposites as "cultivation" and war; he emphasizes moreover that the use of physical violence in its whole extent "by no means excludes the cooperation of intelligence," "violence arms itself with the inventions of the arts and sciences."[70] This cooperation of violence and intelligence brings about the transition from pure war to war under the conditions of culture not in the sense that intelligence as a moral-humane instance strives to tame or even eliminate violence always and everywhere. It is true that intelligence acts moderatingly on violence, but it does so only out of higher purposive rationality, because it is namely able to realize that victory in war, as this is conducted in culture, can only be achieved taking into account and utilizing all subjective and objective factors of the henceforth highly complex "social union." Mere violence could still prevail in pure war, but blind striking out and daredevilry must prove disastrous more often than not when it is a matter of conditions whose manifoldness makes weighing, calculus, and maneuver by every

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[66] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 193. Already in the notes of 1807/8 Clausewitz thought that the medieval "struggle of all against all" had finally ceased, not "because men have gradually become less warlike", but thanks to the establishment of the absolute monarchy (*Politische Schriften*, 54).

[67] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 3 = 194; cf. I, 3 = 243 ("But also among cultured peoples and in the most cultured classes of the same, men are carried away by violent passions").

[68] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 = 232.

[69] *Op. cit.*, II, 1 = 269.

[70] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, §§ 3 and 2 = 192.

actor unavoidable: "That one avoids an obstacle is already instinct to man,"[71] and an extreme refinement of this instinct is intelligence within culture, so that it is able to afford vital orientation and overview. It cannot and does not want to condemn the (remaining) forces of temper to ineffectiveness because they would be perhaps dangerous – the abolition of wars is for the intelligence in Clausewitz's sense no declared or possible goal; but it can and wants to channel them purposive-rationally, and only in view of a higher *efficacy* in action does it tame uninhibited violence: "If we find, therefore, that civilized peoples do not put prisoners to death, do not destroy city and country, it is because intelligence mixes itself more in their warfare and has taught them more effective means for the use of violence than these raw manifestations of instinct."[72] Blind attacking for the purpose of destruction of the enemy is to be condemned precisely from the view of the supreme criterion of higher efficacy.[73] And the subjection of blind passion to the *political* purpose of war means also nothing other than the enforcement of the same criterion and the same purposive-rational mode of thought; for this prevailing of the political purpose implies an act of intelligence whereby the size of the sacrifices is determined analogously to the value of the purpose.[74]

The best service that intelligence can render the "raw element" within the "social union" is thus to tame it according to purposive-rational points of view. We repeat: it is a matter here of a service *to* it, not of an opposition *to* it.[75] This taming for the purpose of "higher efficacy" takes place not only directly, i.e., through explicit prohibitions, social disciplining, and military discipline, but also indirectly, in that namely the carriers of enmity are summarized in collective organizational forms, so that they can no longer move and act at will – in that they must let their feelings be sifted and guided by the existing social and military institutions: "All inventions of art, as weapons, organization, practiced tactics and the principles for the use of troops in combat, are restrictions of the natural instinct, in that it is supposed to be led on detours to a more effective use of its forces" – even if a "certain latitude" must be granted to the further indispensable forces of temper.[76] Enmity thereby becomes more impersonal, more cerebral, if one may say so, and the refinement of weapons has the same effect: while in raw fist-fighting dagger and battle-axe were still used, those "with which the enemy is fought already at a distance form more instruments of the understanding; they let the forces of temper and the actual combat instinct rest almost entirely."[77] And yet without "enmity," without the "instinct for

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[71] *Gustav Adolfs Feldzüge*, *Werke*, IX, 77.
[72] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 3 = 193 f.
[73] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 226.
[74] *Op. cit.*, 217.
[75] Cf. Kondylis, *Macht und Entscheidung*, 80 ff.
[76] *Leitfaden zur Bearbeitung der Taktik*, § 45, in: *Vom Kriege*, 1108.
[77] *Op. cit.*, §§ 46-47 = 1109.

attack and for destruction,"[78] no war is imaginable, just as in the conditions of "cultivation" no warfare is conceivable without leading and planning intelligence. In this henceforth unavoidable cooperation of *both* forces of the psyche, intelligence receives its driving force from the will to victory over the enemy,[79] while enmity partly lives on more or less undiluted by transforming itself into collective hatred or igniting in the fight itself, partly is represented in sublimated form by feelings such as desire for fame and the like.[80] On the highest military level, where the warlike genius dwells in the shape of the gifted commander, this same cooperation appears as a "harmonious union of forces," as inseparable unity of courage and insight, from which alone true, unerring resolution could result.[81]

Now we can survey the whole spectrum of intellectual or temper forces that unfold their efficacy in war between "civilized peoples": hatred and enmity, then the "middle field of free soul activity," in which the sublimated metamorphoses of enmity known to us mix with properties such as courage, and finally intelligence. Clausewitz calls this ensemble of "tendencies prevailing in war" a "wondrous trinity," and attributes the first moment "more to the people," the second "more to the commander and his army" and the third "more to the government."[82] He thus identifies none of the three mentioned intellectual or temper forces with its main carrier, which of course means that all three are to be found in all three subjects of warfare in respectively different dosage. He also undertakes no attempt to commission the intelligence or the government with the task of a taming or even elimination of the two other temper forces or subjects – he knows, incidentally, how wrong it would be to trace the war of the civilized back to a mere act of understanding of the governments.[83] The trinity formula therefore contains no judgment on the correct hierarchization of the magnitudes mentioned in it and it also forms no new definition of war alongside the one already known to us; rather it gives an enumeration of the variables that are effective in a war between civilized peoples, whereby the guiding intention remains to explain on the basis of these variables not perhaps the essence, but the infinite variety of the real and possible forms of war.[84]

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[78] *Op. cit.*, §§ 30-31 = 1107.

[79] "But such is human nature; if the nerve of willpower is missing, the ideas play in vain in the soul", *Feldzüge von 1799*, § 86 *Werke*, VI, 264.

[80] *Leitfaden*, §§ 35-37 = *Vom Kriege*, 1107.

[81] *Vom Kriege*, I, 3 = 232, 236. Cf. *Feldzug von 1796*, § 28 *Werke*, IV, 94 ("But one does not conduct war with the intellect alone... The whole man conducts war...").

[82] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 28 = 213.

[83] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 193.

[84] This has been shown very well by Hepp in his critique of Aron, *Der harmlose Cl.*, esp. 404 ff. Aron himself then at least partially modified his original thesis in his reply (*Verd. Anwalt*, 292 f.). By reading a primacy of moderating political intelligence into the trinity formula, he basically renews Ritter's misleading view that Clausewitz's thought is "idealistic" and "entirely permeated by a victorious belief in the power of reason" (*Staatskunst*, I, 92).

Not accidentally, therefore, the exposition of the trinity formula begins with the famous designation of war as a "true chameleon," and just as consistent is it when Clausewitz sets his theory the task that it maintain itself "floating between these three tendencies as between points of attraction";[85] for to war among "civilized peoples" belong all three equally, and the determination of their possible relationships to one another is not a prescriptive and normative matter, but a question of concrete considerations, which can vary greatly from case to case.

[85] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 28 = 213.

3. War and Politics or Violence and Power

We now want to show that the antithetical unity of "instinct" and purpose-rational intelligence stands in a systematic relationship to the antithetical unity of violence and power, and also that violence and power separate and cross in the same sense as war and politics do within a social union, which for its part is just as unified and divided as human nature, the objectification of which it constitutes. Before we begin with the explanation of this finely branched but clearly structured complex of thought, we must emphatically recall that the first and decisive "attenuation" experienced by war in the transition from pure war to real wars has nothing to do with the objectives and modes of action of a humane or "responsible" politics, but goes back to a "politics" that means the same as the "social union" itself, the political whole or the commonwealth; the concept of "politics," in other words, does not have the sense of a purposeful action, but expresses the political-public intercourse of men with one another within the social union, retaining a good piece of its Aristotelian prehistory, as was still quite common at the beginning of the 19th century when the liberal and democratic concept of politics ("making politics") had not yet fully established itself. Clausewitz, moreover, leaves no doubt about the purely objective reasons for the "attenuation" of pure war: "If the wars of civilized people are much less cruel and destructive than those of the uncivilized, this lies in the social condition of the states, both in themselves and in their relations to one another".[86] This reduction of cruelty or the deviation from pure war certainly does not mean, as we shall see, that "civilized people" do not wage wars of annihilation against one another, since such wars also lie on this side of the boundary of pure war. This constitutes additional proof that the "attenuation" of pure war is just as unconnected to subjective intentions as the general phenomenon of friction, the analysis of which significantly influenced and partly inspired Clausewitz's depiction of the transition from pure to real war.[87] One could say that "attenuation" merely represents that friction which pure war must suffer within the complex social union. Seen in this way, "politics" in the objective sense of political-public intercourse within a civilized commonwealth certainly always acts in a moderating way—however, those Clausewitz interpreters who call politics "the element that always acts in a moderating way" and thereby mean the beneficial purposeful activity of a civilian authority[88] simply do not understand what is being discussed in Clausewitz's text at all; in their moral zeal, they make a logical leap and conceive the objective effect of the social union as the conscious achievement of a subject thinking normatively.

Instead of orienting ourselves by the misleading thread of subjective political objectives, it appears much more fruitful to seek the core of the problem at the intersection of the

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[86] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 192.

[87] See below Section 4, esp. p. 60 f.

[88] Instead of many Ritter, *Lehre*, 47.

anthropological, the cultural-philosophical, and the war-theoretical view. For Clausewitz, the opposing "elements" that make up the unity of politics and war constitute a "discord which is founded in man himself"; the conception of the unity of politics and war arises precisely as an answer to the question of how both aspects of human nature and simultaneously of the social union can be thought together.[89] In the previous section, we described how Clausewitz imagines the unity of opposing tendencies in man and in culture; linking to that, we can now outline the same unity in the field of relations between war and politics. By and large, politics relates to war as man relates to violence, who cannot renounce it, but also cannot live with it permanently. The "social union" is constituted accordingly: it cannot exist in a state of continuous and omnipresent violence, yet at the same time its structure and mode of function must call forth violence from time to time. The necessity of peace between two wars is not morally, but anthropologically and culturally conditioned. And the same reasons that ultimately make the perpetuation of the state of war impossible also bring about the "suspension in the act of war" and thus the politicization of war, i.e., its subjection to the general laws that prevail in the social union as the objectification of human nature. Those "general relations out of which war proceeds" have "made most wars into a half-thing, where actual hostility had to wind its way through such a conflict of relationships that it remained only a very weak element".[90] Every conduct of war in the complex "state of civilization" is thus necessarily political conduct of war, since it must deviate from pure war insofar as it more or less tames blind violence and hate-filled dash in order to be able to take into account the multiplicity of subjective and objective factors and to act accordingly, i.e., rationally with regard to purpose. The main point here is not whether it does this "correctly" or with moral intent, but only that it *must* do this. To the extent that political warfare deviates from pure war, the "hostile feeling" is covered over by the "hostile intention," although, as we know, the former continues to work within the latter.[91] The "political purpose" of the war thereby steps into the foreground and with it also the political view of the necessities of warfare, namely a "calculus of probabilities... proceeding from specific persons and relationships".[92] The blind violence of pure war knew only the goal of the overthrow of the enemy—a goal which, precisely in its generality and rigidity, must appear highly abstract within a concrete and complex situation. Calculus of probability, i.e., political warfare, means flexibility of behavior and of objective depending on the respective situation, means consideration for the "peculiarity of the acting states".[93] War is essentially hostility and the striving for overthrow; political warfare, however, is the purpose-rational inhibition, diversion, and utilization of the essential elements of war within the framework of a calculus of

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[89] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 990. Cf. our analysis in the previous section.
[90] *Op. cit.*, VI, 8 = 659.
[91] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 193; II, 2 = 286.
[92] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 12 = 200.
[93] *Op. cit.*, 201.

probability and on the basis of the consideration of the complexity of a respectively peculiar constellation; political warfare is, in short, war that is waged in the state of civilization.

Politics and war, however, represent a unity not only in the sense that every conduct of war by civilized peoples must be political. Their intertwining reveals itself in an even deeper dimension in the analysis of the genetic character of war, i.e., in the establishment of its origin from "political intercourse." Clausewitz emphasizes again and again that war, and specifically that of "civilized peoples," always "proceeds from a political condition" and is called forth "only by a political motive",[94] "only by the political intercourse of governments and peoples",[95] that politics has "generated" the war.[96] These statements do not mean, as is often assumed, that as the exclusive affair of a political (civilian) "intelligence," war is also to be led according to its essentially moderate will. We know that the transition from pure to real war has to do with the effect of "political intercourse" in general, but not with the purposeful action of a subjective will, which plays a smaller or larger role only on the theoretically subordinate level of the choice between the respectively possible forms of real wars. When Clausewitz speaks here of the "political purpose" of war or of war as a "political act," he stands on that level of theory which is still beyond the choice between war of annihilation and limited war; the "political purpose" is, in other words, initially introduced not as the product of the conscious choice of a subjective will, but only formally, by which it is meant to be said that while political intercourse must first precipitate into subjective political purposes and decisions so that it can call forth war, the content of the choice remains open here. Within the framework of the civilized state, the politics condensed into a political purpose cannot decide for pure war, but certainly can for all possible forms of real war, from the war of annihilation down to mere armed observation.[97] Politics is thus not the normative intelligence that wants to eliminate *a limine* the most violent forms of real war beyond the unavoidable deviation from pure war; it is an intelligence that can guide war only *because* and *only then* when it calls it forth, i.e., it can subject war to its purposes only because these purposes must make use of war for their realization. War is a continuation, thus a product and offspring of politics, not a sudden, inexplicable interruption of political intercourse, something that would be alien to the essence of politics: for in that case its origin and conduct would remain quite incomprehensible.

In this perspective, it appears of course natural that the famous formula, that war is a continuation of political intercourse with the admixture of other means, comes immediately after the observation that war is called forth by precisely this political intercourse, wherein at

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[94] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 23 = 209.
[95] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 990.
[96] *Op. cit.*, 993.
[97] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 11 = 201.

the same time a polemic is directed against those who assume an essential difference between war and politics and think that with war a quite different state, subject to other laws, enters in.[98] These sentences are generally interpreted as if Clausewitz wanted to say by them that the political (civilian) leadership should remain firmly at the helm even after the outbreak of war. This question, however, interests our theorist here only marginally, if at all. His attention is directed rather at the essential affinity between political intercourse and war, i.e., between the constitution of the former as the objectification of all aspects of human nature and the genetic reasons of the latter in the light of that constitution. Above all, he avoids any juxtaposition of "good" politics and "evil" war and therefore is in no hurry to demand the taming of the evil by the good, but insists on the contrary on the fact of a continuity that traces back to homogeneity. We repeat: war would be no continuation of political intercourse if the latter were constituted such that it did not have to, or at least could not, generate war. If war does not have "its own logic",[99] then obviously the logic of politics and the logic of war coincide; and if political intercourse continues in its essence in war,[100] then the essence of political intercourse is not "pure peace," i.e., peace as a state that embodies the precise opposite of war in chemical purity and therefore cannot call forth war. Politics is, in other words, not the counter-concept to war, just as "civilian" and "military" or "war and peace," viewed purely conceptually, represent opposites. Rather, war is a "part" of the "whole," of politics,[101] i.e., both a sub-area in its territory and a modification of its essential quality, thus a specific form of political intercourse. The peculiarity of war, however, becomes understandable only against the background of its above-explained belonging-together or essential affinity with politics and consists merely in the "peculiar nature of its means".[102] When Clausewitz writes of war: "It is a conflict of great interests which is settled by blood, and only in this is it different from the others", he leaves not the slightest doubt that he views war as only one among several conflicts which, while they are not settled by blood, nonetheless characterize political intercourse just as much. Politics and war can thus be subsumed together under the generic term of conflict, and this explains their essential affinity, which for its part makes understandable the thesis that politics is the womb in which war develops.[103] The famous formula states that war and politics distinguish themselves from one another "only" in the means, but that is not intended to mean that their commonality is

[98] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 990.
[99] *Op. cit.*, 991.
[100] *Op. cit.*
[101] *Op. cit.*
[102] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 24 = 210.
[103] *Op. cit.*, II, 3 = 303.

limited to the purposes:[104] it extends rather to their contradictory, multidimensional structure, which lives from "conflict" and generates "conflict," in whatever form.[105]

If the described essential affinity of war and politics makes the character of their unity understandable, the grasp of that which is peculiar to war, i.e., its specific characteristic, has no less theoretical significance, especially since after establishing that affinity the danger exists of treating all aspects of politics as war or all aspects of war as politics and thus failing to take note of the particularity of concrete situations, which are distinguished precisely by the predominance of one single aspect, in bellicose intoxication or pacifistic naïveté. Although Clausewitz thinks in the then-current categories of the European balance of power, he views the same purely pragmatically, i.e., as an expedient relation of forces, and connects this view of his with no international law definition of war that would aim at its containment. He speaks of the moderating effect of international law only in passing and rather contemptuously,[106] and accordingly he places the specific nature of war in real magnitudes, specifically in violence, as can be gathered from the fundamental definition of war as well as from the determination of its peculiarity based on the violent means used in it. If we wanted to use a material distinctive feature, such as the respective intensity of the "conflict," for the theoretical separation of war and peace from one another, their difference would turn out to be only gradual and ultimately unclear. If, however, we remain with the formal criterion of the use of violence, we gain a dividing line that is admittedly relatively narrow, but at least distinct and verifiable. Clausewitz prefers the latter, especially as he sees in the "separation of the heterogeneous" a "main task" of theory,[107] without, of course, wanting to say by this that the establishment of heterogeneity would exclude the presence of similarities or affinities. Indeed, this procedure proves to be extremely fruitful in the present case. First, Clausewitz thereby succeeds (again without reference to constructions of international law) in a clean separation of war and peace—for him concepts that are capable of no gradation.[108] If peace is defined as the non-violent state, this criterion is meant formally, as just stated; it is thus not asked whether perhaps war preparations are taking place which can or must soon put an end to the temporarily prevailing non-violence, but only established that *hic et nunc* no violence is being applied, thus no war is being waged. The apparent paradox lies in the fact that Clausewitz views the use of violence as the specific

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[104] Thus Schering, *Wehrphilosophie*, 91.

[105] Clausewitz sometimes also refers to individual similarities of war with "the rest of life", e.g. when he compares the problem of attack and defense with "legal intercourse, which is so similar to war" (*Vom Kriege*, VI, 1, § 2 = 614).

[106] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 2 = 192: "Imperceptible, hardly worth mentioning limitations, which it [sc. violence] imposes on itself under the name of international law custom, accompany it without substantially weakening its power".

[107] *Op. cit.*, II, 1 = 272.

[108] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6A = 988

characteristic of war precisely because he by no means considers peace to be a conflict-free state. For were peace truly such, it would suffice to define war merely as conflict. Precisely because conflicts exist also in peace, a further specification becomes necessary here, namely that war is a conflict involving the use of (armed) violence. From this point of view, one must understand a remark by Clausewitz that many a reader has taken as sophistry[109] and many as a mere joke,[110] namely that the defender begins the war first, since a bloodless possession would be preferable to the attacker.[111] Here Clausewitz is thinking, as he himself writes, of the "concept of war" [120], i.e., of the use of violence as its specificum, but the remark implies simultaneously that peace is anything but a *per definitionem* conflict-free state, since the attack, i.e., the "advancing for possession," was conceived and partly also executed still outside of war.[112]

The criterion of the use of violence additionally permits a clean separation between war and its purpose, which in the "civilized condition" can only stem from political intercourse, is thus a political purpose and as such "lies actually outside the territory of the pure concept of war".[113] Political purpose and war lie, to be sure, on the same plane, the plane of "political intercourse", but the territory that war occupies on this common plane is less extensive than that upon which the political purpose forms. The preponderance of the political purpose over war thus hangs together originally with the constitution of political intercourse; this becomes clear, however, only when war is defined exclusively as the use of violence; for no political intercourse or "social union" can endure the state of permanent and all-encompassing violence. Only war can thus be a continuation of politics for a certain, even longer, but still historically limited time, but not politics a continuation of war. An inversion of the famous formula would be senseless for Clausewitz, since uninterrupted and all-encompassing violence cannot provide the *modus vivendi* of a society. Commentators who hold such an inversion to be possible (regardless of whether they welcome or regret it) overlook the specific and strict sense in which Clausewitz uses his concepts. Clausewitz would raise no objection if someone were to subsume political intercourse and war under the generic term of conflict, in order then to conclude from it that warlike and non-warlike conflicts continue or condition one another. But he would not agree to an inversion of his formula, since it would disregard the specificity of the concept of war and thus ruin the foundation pillar of his war theory. The opposite error is committed by commentators who indeed think Clausewitz would not approve an inversion of the formula simply because he distinguishes clearly between war and peace, but without being clear about

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[109] Thus e.g. Carrias, *Pensée*, 212.
[110] Thus e.g. Lenin, *Clausewitz' Werk*, 23.
[111] *Vom Kriege*, VI, 7 = 644.
[112] *Op. cit.*, 645. Also, the production of weapons does not belong to the fighting or war itself (*op. cit.*, II, 1 = 269) and must apparently be regarded as a peaceful activity in contrast to the use of weapons.
[113] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 214.

the criteria for this based on the violence criterion; the difference between war and peace is then presented, at least implicitly, as one between conflict and lack of conflict, thus rejecting the common subsumption of war and peace under the generic term of conflict undertaken by Clausewitz *expressis verbis*.[114]

The insight that the definitional binding of war to violence implies a conception of peace as a conflict-laden state now leads us back to the question of the general character of political intercourse in its relation to war. As stated, politics must be essentially related to war in a certain respect, since only it can call it forth, although violence forms not its own specificum, but exclusively the specific characteristic of war. The problem can now be formulated as follows: what is it that can generate violence without being violence itself and although it even often tames violence? The "conflict" of which we just spoke is evidently no cause of violence, but only a situation in which violence is possible, but not necessary. Violent conflict, i.e., war, forms only one form of conflict; conflict in general and war must therefore have a common, even if in each case differently acting, cause, and this can again be none other than the striving for power. The observation that the striving for power and the power factor in general permeate political intercourse makes understandable why politics can call forth violence, i.e., war, and use it as an instrument. Only politics can indeed call forth war; any other violence which is unleashed not by political but by closer intercourse among individuals is only private duel, which affects the "social union" as such quite little, if at all. However, a violence of such magnitude as that which we encounter in war can impossible flow from reasons that do not concern the whole commonwealth and are not laid out in it. Although the conceptual and real separation between the violence of war and the non-violence of (remaining) political intercourse—a separation which, however, as we shall see immediately, becomes truly understandable precisely through the insight into the power character of politics—remains fully maintained, it can nevertheless be said with regard to the potential for violence lying in the striving for power and also on the basis of historical experience that politics relates to war *mutatis mutandis* as war itself relates to its absolute form, which must "hover in the background... continuously" behind every conduct

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[114] Aron is guilty of this confusion, who on the one hand holds Clausewitz's sharp separation of war and peace against the reversal of the formula, without however being clear about the criteria for the same, on the other hand praises the moderation of the Soviet standpoint in this question, since here a distinction is sharply drawn between war and peace (*Penser la guerre*, I, 109; II, 63, 269 f.). But those who reverse the formula do so because they consider war and peace equally as conflict situations, albeit of different intensity, while the Soviets reject a reversal of the formula not because they do not do this (the ideological struggle or the class struggle continues in peace according to their view), but only because they, just like Clausewitz, bind the concept of war to the criterion of violence (see e.g. *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 20; Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 252 f.). Not this point is tone-setting in their overall view, but rather the unity of violent and non-violent forms and means of struggle in the service of one and the same political purpose. In this perspective, the question of nuclear war is also seen in the currently prevailing Soviet military doctrine (see below Excursus D), which Aron admittedly hardly addresses.

of war,[115] although it very often does not step out of this background. Politics as striving for power is pursued not least with regard to the possibility of its intensification into violence. Behind politics hovers the image of violence or of war, just as behind every limited violence hovers the image of extreme violence. There is, moreover, no reason to doubt that Clausewitz would consider valid for political relationships as well, when these lead to war, that schema which he set up regarding the succession of rest and tension in war. At the beginning here stands a "balance in the wider meaning..., where all relationships and interests come into the calculation"; it then comes to tension when one side sets itself a "new positive purpose" and begins with preparations for its attainment, while the other takes countermeasures; and finally the decision occurs.[116]

The conceptual confusing of power and violence (of which moral-normativistic thought has availed itself since time immemorial in order to paint the striving for power as abominable as possible and at the same time to keep itself, as an enemy of all violence, free from the suspicion of this same striving for power) blocks insight into the elementary fact that politics, precisely in its capacity as striving for power, must very often tame violence or war if it wants to achieve its purposes at all. We know that with the "raw state," pure war and blind dash are also at an end; in the place of hostile feeling steps now hostile intention, i.e., intelligence succeeds now in bringing under control those instincts that seek their immediate discharge in violence, channeling them rationally with regard to purpose and initiating "more effective means for the application of violence... than these raw expressions of instinct".[117] The taming of violence is no achievement of a peace-loving and humane insight. Purpose-rational intelligence becomes aware that within the complex social union the direct, unconsidered pursuit of the desired possibly or even as a rule entails only waste or attrition of one's own strength. In the moment where this becomes clear, the paths of the striving for power, which must now be far-sighted and circumspect, and blind violence, which thirsts for immediate satisfaction, separate, and violence places itself in the service of the striving for power in the same sense and extent as intelligence must hold instinct in check and channel it purposefully in order to realize its plans. The striving for power now sets limits to violence if it must or wants to use it, and in its purpose-rationality it variously brings suspension into the act of war. There is therefore no contradiction between the origin of war from politics and the attenuation of war by this same politics. The distance between power and violence, between political and physical superiority becomes so great with the advancing complexity of culture that something can happen now which was unthinkable in the "raw state": back then a war between unequals could hardly take place, but after the forced deviation of war from its original or pure concept, armed conflict

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[115] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 992.

[116] *Op. cit.*, III, 18 = 414.

[117] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 193 f. See the analysis in the previous section, esp. p. 25 f.

between states of unequal strength is no longer a rarity.[118] The combinatorics of power is simply much richer in nuance than the clumsy mechanics of violence; it permits countless variations and ways out, and above all it allows, alongside the struggle among enemies, also the "game" among friends to arise, with the help of which the weak can first put himself in the position to assert claims against those who are in themselves stronger.

Without the clear distinction between striving for power and violence, without the insight into the diversity of their nature and their paths despite all commonality of goals, the relations between politics and war cannot be understood. Precisely because power is something much more comprehensive, far-sighted and demanding than violence—namely a genuine product of the "state of civilization" in contrast to the "raw," in which power and violence largely coincided—politics remains superior to war, i.e., war must be led under consideration of the whole "political intercourse." Many commentators think Clausewitz's subjection of war to politics would be tantamount to a subjection of politics itself to the goal of peace also in the sense of the renunciation of power, and they argue thereby that for Clausewitz the increase of military power in itself would be no goal of politics.[119] The latter is certainly correct, but in order to be allowed to conclude from it an innate peacefulness of politics or its readiness for power renunciation, one must have erroneously confused the goals of the army as organized violence with the power purposes of politics, or violence and power with one another. Precisely this confusion is alien to Clausewitz; he knows that political power purposes very often cannot be achieved in the way the military as specialists of violence imagine, who, like every other specialist too, are arrested in a one-sided and rigid way of viewing things. He who adopts the political point of view can make use of violence, yet keep himself far from the intoxication of violence, can thus see the question of the use of violence in a broader perspective. This is certainly no principled renunciation of the possibility of the use of violence, and still less does it mean a readiness for power renunciation (were such a readiness present, politics would truly be a very easy business!). For peace too appears acceptable only when it is accompanied at least by a securing of power, which within a complex political intercourse naturally cannot be guaranteed only by military strength. In any case, Clausewitz's theoretical concern is not to find the path from violence to the humane politics of moderation, but rather to grasp and evaluate violence and its function politically, i.e., on the basis of higher power considerations.

There are several direct and indirect proofs for this. Clausewitz never disputed that those real wars among "civilized people" in which the highest possible intensification of violence had appeared, namely the Napoleonic wars, had a political character, i.e., arose within a certain form of political intercourse and pursued political purposes, thus purposes that aimed at a

[118] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 216.
[119] Thus e.g. Aron, *Penser la guerre*, I, 171 ff.

transformation of this same intercourse. Here politics goes hand in hand not with moderation, but on the contrary with an extreme intensification of violence—of course always under the guidance of political viewpoints, since it is not a matter here of a pure war or war among "raw peoples"; Clausewitz, moreover, makes no reproaches against Napoleon because of his conduct of war, but rather views it as the inevitable result of the novel "political intercourse" that emerged from the Revolution.[120] To be sure, Clausewitz writes that the political character of war becomes visible above all when "the political relations... remove themselves so far from a pure opposite [of] hostility and the war itself is permeated more than usual by bonds of peace".[121] That does not mean, however, that the limited war alone deserves to be called "political" because of its "more humane" form, but only means that where violence in its paroxysm does not cast everything else into the shadow, one can much more easily see that in war among civilized people other factors besides violence also mix in, that we are thus not dealing with a pure war; the more, on the contrary, violence increases, the greater becomes the possibility of an optical illusion, thus of a confusion of the real war of annihilation with pure war—and we will yet see[122] that Clausewitz himself could rid himself of this illusion only after a long time. The correctness of our interpretation is confirmed by passages in which it is read that limited war only "appears" to be more political,[123] as well as by others in which it is said directly that both kinds of war, the limited just as much as the war of annihilation, are equally political;[124] Clausewitz even does not shrink from the consequence that in many a war "politics and hostility," "political principle" and "concept of violence and annihilation" coincide entirely.[125] Precisely in the finished section of the main work in which the relationship between war and politics is discussed most thoroughly, Clausewitz explicitly refrains from an identification of "political" warfare with limited war and opines that under all constellations that political calculus has to grasp, that one must also be able to be included where the "nature of all relationships" conditions a war of annihilation; subsequently he connects the unconditional preference for limited war not with politics in the sense of "general insight," but with politics in the conventional concept of a "cautious, devious, also dishonest cleverness" turned away from violence.[126] He thought no differently in 1812, when he demanded the extreme risk.[127]

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[120] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 997 f.
[121] *Feldzug des Herzogs von Braunschweig*, § 1 *Werke*, X, 267.
[122] See below Section 4
[123] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 25 = 211.
[124] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 26 = 211.
[125] Letter to v. Roeder of 22.12.1827 Zwei strat. Briefe, 165.
[126] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 26 = 212.
[127] "Without courage and determination one can never do anything in great matters, for danger exists everywhere, and politics is not always a cowardly cunning, with which many consider it synonymous", *Bekenntnisschrift Schriften*, 699.

The closer discussion of the two kinds of war[128] will show us that all this betrays no inclination of our theorist for war *à outrance*. But it proves that he feels just as little inclination to lecture on the moral and humane tasks of politics. Not without irony did he want to leave to the philosophers the question whether war itself as well as its newer and more intensive form "is wholesome for humanity in general or not",[129] and he would doubtless say the same about politics in general. For he was convinced from the beginning that politics is struggle for power and it is not worth racking one's brains over something that must simply be accepted in its unalterability and anthropological fatality. "For what does everyone strive? To get the upper hand over his opponent," he notes calmly.[130] In an even earlier note he had, on the basis of the same view of human things, held not only the struggle for liberation but equally the lust for conquest to be natural modes of behavior of political subjects: "No one can deny a nation the right to fight with all forces for its advantages, to tear itself loose from chains of slavery—indeed not even France can one blame if it sets its foot on our neck and lets its empire of fearful vassals reach to the Polar Sea".[131] Already then the fundamental separation of morality and politics was familiar to him, so that he could reproach politicians who wanted to transfer their private moral principles to their political behavior with egoism, "for they act at the head of a state as they ought to act in private life".[132] He knew of the political price of virtue and therefore opined that in politics a "pure mind and knightly virtue" are permitted only to him "who acquires the right to them through energy-filled activity".[133] He never pleaded for a solution by violence if a non-violent one was in sight; and yet, as we already know, he stood rather suspiciously vis-à-vis the efficacy of international law,[134] and he never publicly affirmed a belief in the capacity of political subjects for dialogue and consensus: not only the liberation of Germany, but also its political unity did he expect from the "sword," "when one of its states subjugates all the others".[135] Still in a text written shortly before his death, he summarized this view of the essence of politics in the form of a polemic against the "philosophers" who believe in the suspension of the opposites existing in the world: "That would be very unphilosophical, for the whole physical and spiritual nature is kept in equilibrium by opposites." Even if "liberalism" were to triumph and "despotism" were destroyed, neither an idyllic peace relationship would ensue nor would the "strife of interests and passions" fall silent. We can therefore seek the opposites of peoples

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[128] See below Section 5, p. 82 ff.
[129] *Vom Kriege*, VI, 26 = 800.
[130] *Aufzeichnungen aus 1807/8* Polit. Schriften, 55.
[131] *Aufz. aus dem Jahre 1803 Polit. Schriften*, 2; Geist u. Tat, 11.
[132] *Aufz. aus dem Jahre 1803* Polit. Schriften, 3.
[133] *Gustav Adolphs Feldzüge...*, *Werke*, IX, 30 f.
[134] See above note 106.
[135] *Umtriebe* (1819-1823?), Polit. Schriften, 171. Cf. the *Bekenntnisschrift* of 1812, in which Clausewitz pleads for the use of "all means of coercion" to "hold the people to their most sacred duty", *Schriften*, 738.

"not in maxims, but in the whole sum of their spiritual and material relationships to one another, and about this it is probably advisable to query history".[136]

In a single passage[137] Clausewitz says that politics unites and reconciles "all interests of humanity", which was interpreted to mean that for him politics was no mere power struggle.[138] Nevertheless, the analysis of the context makes such an interpretation appear as a short-circuit. First, it must be clarified that Clausewitz relates these interests of humanity by no means to international relations, where such things evidently do not come into question, but counts them only among the remaining interests of "internal administration"—interests which politics, as "trustee" of the same, has to defend "against other states." In the center of observation stands, in other words, here too the power struggle among states, whereby it is meant to be made clear that without the existence of the state in this struggle no guarantee of the rights and well-being of its subjects is possible. By the state asserting itself in this struggle, it also fulfills toward its subjects the duty to protect them. "Humanity" does not dictate the behavior of the state, but is first protected by the state within its own borders in the form of the rights and freedoms of its subjects. The character of these rights and freedoms is, moreover, not explained in detail, and the limits of the action of the state inwardly remain undetermined. Clausewitz is obviously interested more in the mere fact that the existence of an independent state guarantees that there are and can be rights and freedoms of its subjects than in what they are in terms of content. He therefore names no moral or natural-law criteria on the basis of which the question of the rights and freedoms of the subjects should be solved. On the contrary, he disputes that there can be spiritual authorities outside the state which would have to guide its activity. "There is no moral [force] outside the concept of the state and law," he writes,[139] and means by this that only the state through its power, as it manifests itself in the binding nature of the law, establishes peace and morality, thus "humanity." To protect this "humanity," i.e., its own law, amounts to its self-assertion.

For Clausewitz there is thus no view of domestic policy that would be independent of foreign policy considerations—more precisely: domestic policy must be seen from the view of the necessities of foreign policy. And in foreign policy, which forms in his eyes high politics *par excellence*, there prevails again continually and eternally the "raw state," the state of nature and the law of power, as one knew in Europe at the latest since Hobbes. It is therefore incorrect to want to derive a primacy of domestic policy in Clausewitz from the fact that he, not least in light of the experiences with the Revolution, established a dependence of warfare on the internal

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[136] *Die Verhältnisse Europas seit der Teilung Polens* Polit. Schriften, 226.
[137] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 993.
[138] Ritter, *Lehre*, 64 f.; cf. Paret, *Die polit. Ansichten*, esp. 347.
[139] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 2 = 192.

constitution of a state.[140] The establishment of this dependence is, however, a historical and sociological statement which in itself says just as little about the primacy of domestic or foreign policy as, say, the reference to the fact that foreign policy is usually made by people who must also be active domestically. Rather, the primacy of foreign policy rests on the conviction that regardless of the internal constitution of states, independent of differences or similarities in this respect, the laws of coexistence or competition between states have their own logic, to which every attempt to shape international relations on the basis of ideological sympathies or principles must succumb. Against the necessarily universalistic tendency of such principles, which connects their advocates beyond state borders, the state is viewed from the perspective of the primacy of foreign policy as an autonomous entity, as an end in itself or as the highest value, whose successful assertion in the eternally enduring struggle of states against one another possesses absolute priority. The shaping of domestic policy should therefore (and here the contrast to its primacy reveals itself most sharply) take place with regard to the needs of the foreign political struggle, so that thereby the state can achieve a maximum of available forces—and not, for instance, with regard to perhaps ethically welcome principles or the interest of a group at the cost of the total state power.

There can be no doubt that Clausewitz would recognize his own train of thought in the primacy of foreign policy understood in this way. He had already come early to the view that "there is no politically more important purpose than the independence of the state and the nation",[141] and the subsequent experiences and deepened reflections only strengthened his belief that the whole commonwealth rests actually "on the idea of defense against an external enemy".[142] It is admittedly not particularly difficult to schematize his political attitude and to classify him somewhere between monarchist reaction and liberal progressiveness.[143] A much more complicated task is to reconstruct in detail his respective political stances from the view of concern for the combat power and capability of the Prussian state of that time. His recommendation to this state was to base the army and with it the war not on "a few tons of gold" in the treasury, but on the whole "national strength".[144] He knew that this mobilization of national strength made many an internal reform unavoidable, but on the other hand he feared the internal strife that the reforms would presumably trigger, and, although he evidently did not share the class prejudices of the nobility, he nevertheless held back with criticism mindful of

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[140] Thus Weil, *Guerre*, 307 ff.

[141] *Ueber die künftigen Kriegs-Operationen Preußens gegen Frankreich* (November 1807 - March 1808), *Schriften*, 79.

[142] "The main idea which underlies the state association is defense against the external enemy, everything else can be regarded strictly speaking as faux frais", Letter to Gneisenau of 9.9.1824 Pertz-Delbrück, *Das Leben*, V, 504.

[143] Thus especially in Marxist literature, see e.g. Engelberg, *Clausewitz*, esp. VI-LVII.

[144] *Nachrichten über Preußen in seiner großen Katastrophe* (1824/5), Polit. Schriften, 7.

its factual importance for the army,[145] and correspondingly moderated his constitutional demands in order to intensify the polemic against the demagogues.[146] What frightens him about anarchy or what he takes for it is not so much the social aspect in the narrower sense, but the paralysis of the state's capacity to act brought about thereby, the disintegration of its unified will.[147] The carrier of this will, the impartial government, should according to Clausewitz's ideal conception, which expressly disregards the weaknesses and the "private interest of the rulers",[148] carry out or brake reforms, or initiate domestic political measures at all or not, depending on whether this increases the total combat power of the state or effects the opposite. This attitude is well illustrated by Clausewitz's remarks on the arming of the people and people's war. Here he does not enter at all into the arguments of those who consider people's war a "revolutionary means" and therefore reject it *a limine* for political reasons, but he wants to treat the question pragmatically, i.e., discuss whether people's war is good as a "means of combat" or not. Obviously not without any regard for political factors and side effects, he advocates subsequently, however, that this means of combat be applied with understanding, in any case rather as an appendage or auxiliary troop of the standing army than as an autonomous force.[149] Unwilling to accept the danger of a Prussian repetition of the elemental popular outbreaks in the Vendée or in Spain studied closely by him,[150] he wished in 1812 that the government, which calls forth the storm of people's war, also "remain master of the same," give it "the right direction".[151] And in his last utterance on the subject he distinguished anew between a "true arming of the people," as in Spain, and the formation of voluntary organized corps to reinforce the standing military power, either comprehensively or only for the defense of the country.[152] Thus his thoughts on the arming of the people constitute in a certain respect a continuation of the preceding Prussian debates on the most expedient form to combine the fighting method of the standing army with the skirmisher system.[153] Decisive for our question are, of course, the *foreign* policy considerations that did not let him become an advocate of general conscription. The introduction of the same under the social and political conditions then prevailing in Prussia, opined Clausewitz, would entail such an internal turmoil that it—independent of the

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[145] See the good remarks by Rothfels, *C. v. Clausewitz*, 138 f.
[146] *Umtriebe*, *Polit. Schriften*, esp. 166 ff.
[147] Thus Clausewitz opined that "a large wide country with European culture is not to be conquered otherwise than with the help of internal discord", *Der russische Feldzug*, *Werke*, VII, 176.
[148] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 993.
[149] *Op. cit.*, VI, 26 = 799 f., 803.
[150] *Précis de la guerre en Espagne et en Portugal*, *Schriften*, 604-611; *Übersicht des Krieges in der Vendée 1793*, *Werke*, X, 323-348.
[151] *Bekenntnisschrift*, *Schriften*, 740.
[152] *Feldzüge von 1799*, § 15 *Werke*, V, 145 f.
[153] On this Höhn, *Revolution*, esp. 338, 365.

abstractly posed question whether it in itself increases the combat power of the state or not—would have to have a paralyzing effect.

We know that the unity of politics and war in Clausewitz does not mean the occasional crossing and cooperation of two essentially heterogeneous magnitudes, but rather two different degrees of intensity within one and the same whole. If war is a "part" and not the opposite of "political intercourse," then this must be constituted such that it can, indeed must, call forth war. But if war is called forth precisely by political intercourse, then it too for its part cannot be a pure war which is decided once and for all in a single engagement with simultaneous total mobilization of all forces of the belligerents. The insight into the unity of politics and war in the state of war conditions now the structure of Clausewitz's war theory in the narrower sense of the word, i.e., his theory on strategy and tactics. Stated differently: Clausewitz's war theory can be logically derived from his view on the unity of war and politics, although genetically the reverse is true. Here, namely, the fundamental distinction between strategy and tactics or between war and combat, from which Clausewitz proceeded already in his earliest writings, gradually led to the insight into the significance of "political intercourse" for the entire process of war.[154] The logical coherence of Clausewitz's thought becomes visible in the manner in which he connects the mentioned distinction with his cultural-philosophical reflections. He bases his doctrine of combat on the observation that in the "simple conditions of savage peoples" war was "a single great engagement," while with us it consists of "a whole series of engagements"; and "this disintegration of the activity into so many individual actions has its ground in the great multiplicity of relationships out of which war proceeds with us".[155] If combat or war were absorbed in a single engagement, then war theory, if it were necessary at all, would be able to limit itself to tactics as the doctrine of the engagement; only the disintegration of warlike activity into several engagements makes strategy necessary as the coordination of engagements for the purpose of victory.[156] Strategy is thus the result of the disintegration of war into several acts of war as a consequence of the complexity of the social union and simultaneously that through which the intellectual grasp of that complexity, the consideration and weighing of its various aspects asserts itself in the conduct of war. If for the small war a "certain craftsmanship" is somewhat sufficient, in the great war "more scientific and executed views" prevail.[157] If one turns from the battlefield to the whole theater of war, the number of possible relations and

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[154] See the next section, esp. p. 61 ff.
[155] *Vom Kriege*, IV, § 3 = 422.
[156] *Op. cit.*, II, 1 = 270 f. Cf. already the *Bekenntnisschrift* of 1812, *Schriften*, 741: "since war no longer consists of a single battle as with raw peoples, the art of war falls into two parts differing from each other by purpose and means", i.e. tactics and strategy; see also the letter to Gneisenau of 17.6.1811, *Schriften*, 645 f.
[157] *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg* (1810/11), *Schriften*, 228.

combinations increases until strategy,[158] admittedly in its "highest regions," "borders on politics and statecraft or rather becomes both".[159]

In the transition from tactics to strategy, the transition from pure to real war repeats itself *mutatis mutandis*—this time, however, on the level of real war itself. It is true that in the constellation of real war among "civilized peoples" that element of it which comes closest to pure war, namely the engagement, has already lost its original simplicity and transformed into a very modified duel.[160] On the other hand, however, it is the case that every real war, which must stand under the highest law of pure war as the condensation of the existential magnitudes inseparable from war at all,[161] stands just as much in the sign of the engagement despite all disintegration into several acts of war; if therefore Clausewitz uses the unpolitical or pure concept of war as an orientation point in his analysis of war become political, the reason for this lies in his conviction that also in political war everything stands under the law of struggle, of decision by arms in the engagement. "However manifold this [war] may be, however far it may remove itself from the raw settlement of hatred and hostility in a fistfight, however many things may insert themselves that are not themselves struggle, it always lies in the concept of war that all effects appearing in it must originally proceed from struggle".[162] How the concepts of struggle and engagement found their existential generalization in the concept of pure war, we will yet see.[163] The theses presented repeatedly and emphatically also in the main work, that war means struggle,[164] that the engagement is the "actual warlike activity"[165] or "the only means" in war,[166] and that tactical successes, thus successes in the engagement, would decide the outcome of the war,[167] stand firmly established already at the beginning of Clausewitz's war-theoretical career, and indeed in a dominating place. In the real or possible engagement the indispensable reference point of every warlike action is seen here—otherwise, Clausewitz emphasizes without fear of banality, one would need no armed forces,[168] there could be no talk of war at all, war

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[158] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 2 = 224.
[159] *Op. cit.*, III, 1 = 347.
[160] *Op. cit.*, IV, 8 = 449.
[161] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 230.
[162] *Op. cit.*, 222.
[163] See the next section.
[164] *Vom Kriege*, II, 1 = 269; IV, 9 = 453.
[165] *Op. cit.*, IV, 1 = 419; IV, 3 = 422.
[166] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 1 = 949.
[167] *Op. cit.*, IV, 3 = 425; VI, 8 = 658 f. Cf. already *Bemerkungen*, 17, and *Strategie*, 47 f.
[168] *Strategie*, 62; almost literal repetitions in *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 235 f., and in the letter to Gneisenau of 17.6.1811, *Schriften*, 647. In the main work, the elementary fact is pointed out again that "fighting forces" means "armed men" and therefore the "idea of combat" underlies here (I, 2 = 222). Clausewitz thus wants to impress upon us precisely that armed men face each other in war, who are ready to kill each other, otherwise no war and no war theory can exist at all. How clearly he saw when he insisted on this banality - admittedly mindful of its implications - is shown precisely by the attempts of

would no longer be a reality. Strategy must therefore be determined according to its means and not according to its purposes, since that (namely the engagement) is applied quite generally by it, is only one and "can nowhere be thought away without destroying the concept of war," while the purposes are very manifold and cannot be exhausted.[169] The complexity of "political intercourse" thus does not abolish the necessity of recourse to the elementary core of war, although this core is conceived in the really occurring war as engagement, in the "strict" or "pure concept" of war, however, as condensation of existential magnitudes.

Finally, let it be noted that the problem of attack and defense in Clausewitz can also be made understandable as a further aspect of the unity of war and political intercourse. This is, of course, obvious insofar as (strategic) attack and (strategic) defense are dictated by considerations which for their part spring from politics. But the matter has an additional, deeper dimension. Since the difference between attack and defense dominates the "whole territory of war",[170] since strategy, as soon as it proceeds to concretize itself, must make the choice between attack and defense, the dialectic of attack and defense arises in the same moment in which strategy, in whatever form, steps onto the plan, in which war is recognized as part of a political intercourse. The pure concept of war knows only the falling upon one another of the two enemies; defense and attack differ perhaps here regarding the motivation of the enemies from one another, but the struggle is otherwise always one and the same.[171] Defense and attack as forms of warfare therefore indicate by their mere presence that the transition from pure to real war has already taken place, that political intercourse has reached the "state of civilization," that now the widely branched game of power has placed the mere confrontation of violence in the

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today's commentators to avoid this very banality - admittedly again with regard to its implications - somehow. Thus Aron (*Penser la guerre*, I, 179 ff., cf. 295 f.) wants to relativize the thesis of combat as the only means in war by remarking that here Clausewitz only thinks of the abstract concept of war, there are also other ways to achieve the set goals etc. It is a matter here of conceptual confusion, the father of which is probably the pious wish to dissolve war as a reality into thin air. As Aron puts the question, it is no longer about the pursuit of specific goals in a state of war, but about the pursuit of political goals in general, where the use of force may also be unnecessary. By some logical and linguistic acrobatics, Aron incidentally wants to create the impression that Clausewitz does not use the terms "way" and "means" synonymously, but also points out "ways" that do not require combat as a "means". In the passage he refers to (*Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 221), however, all actions are acts of war, which underlie precisely the idea of a real or possible combat (these are: destruction of armed forces, conquest, occupation or invasion of provinces, other military enterprises with political aim, awaiting enemy thrusts). Thus Clausewitz's clarifying sentence is overlooked, there are "many ways to the goal" in war (my emphasis); the ways *in* war (as Clausewitz defines this word) cannot be paved otherwise than by the means of combat

[169] *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 237. Clausewitz never departed from the thesis that combat is the only means of strategy, see *Vom Kriege*, II, 2 = 293 f.; III, 1 = 345; VI, 30 = 847 ("The significance of a combat is for strategy... the soul of the same").

[170] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 220.

[171] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 16 = 204.

shadow and that therefore conflicts are possible also among very unequal opponents: only now does the field of combinations of offensive and defensive warfare open in its full breadth.[172] From the analysis of the dialectic of defense and attack, two results now emerge which overlap with central theses of general war theory. First, the law of the elementary is confirmed thereby, namely by establishing that there can be no absolutely passive defense, that defense must be struggle just as much as attack; second—conversely—an explanation of the suspension in war is offered, which is interpreted as a consequence of the superiority of defense over attack and thus of the advantageous starting position of the weaker. These two results, which also found their due place in the main work,[173] belong to the relatively early theorems of Clausewitz's war doctrine.[174] Here, however, we are not interested in the details of these theorems, but merely in the fact of their early emergence and their later incorporation into a closed and at the same time multidimensional system of thought, so that they could now be logically derived from the same, although they had chronologically preceded it. We now want to describe how this flowing together of several earlier insights into a single synthesis took place after the intellectual axes were discovered that could support such a synthesis.

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[172] Rothfels (*C. v. Clausewitz*, 158 f.) rightly noted that Clausewitz's discussion of attack and defense primarily wants to answer the question "how indeed wars between parties of very unequal strength are possible"; it is not a matter of an "ethically grounded preference for the defensive". In this context, one should also recall Clausewitz's attempt to encourage the Prussian movement against Napoleon through his theory of defense as the stronger form, see the *Bekenntnisschrift* of 1812, *Schriften*, 747 ff.

[173] *Vom Kriege*, VI, 8 = 647, 649 (defense is not merely passive); I, 1, § 17 = 205 (superiority of defense and suspension in war). Cf. above note 111.

[174] See on the first point: *Strategie*, 55; *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 300 f.; *Bekenntnisschrift*, *Schriften*, 742 ff. On the second see especially the treatise *Ueber das Fortschreiten*, 236.

4. The Path to Synthesis

If the core of Clausewitz's theory and especially the neuralgic point of the transition from pure to real war is understood as proposed in the two preceding sections, it becomes possible to view the development of his thought in a new light and to bring all his texts under a common denominator. The common denominator on the level of interpretation does not mean, however, that no shifts in standpoint or even contradictions are to be found in the texts to be interpreted themselves; contradiction-free interpretation and lack of contradiction in the object of interpretation must not, contrary to a widespread usage of commentators, be confused with one another. Contradictory and non-contradictory elements in a work are to be thought together either such that several (relatively) independent lines of thought, which are in themselves contradiction-free, extend in a straight line and precisely in this their consistency cannot find the way to logical unity with one another, or such that they find it after a directional one among them changes its course thanks to a new insight and thereby establishes a new relationship of all others to one another. Clausewitz's intellectual development is driven by a strict methodological consciousness and by the genuinely theoretical concern to find the adequate individual concepts as well as the general conceptual framework into which the multiplicity of phenomena or all those magnitudes could be logically ordered without contradiction which had from the beginning a firm, albeit more or less isolated, place in his thought. These magnitudes are gradually connected with one another precisely by their classification into an ever-broadening framework, and simultaneously they gain ever new theoretical dimensions and aspects, whereby the most important among them become supports of this same framework. Since they are continuously used and processed according to the growing theoretical needs, one could also designate Clausewitz's intellectual development as a "process of clarification".[175] That is, however, only the one aspect of it. For the final clarification occurred not from immanent necessity, in calm and linear progress that knows no break, not by mere summation of sifted and isolatedly processed parts, but only on the basis of a new insight which turned upside down what had been assumed until then and consequently made possible the erection of a firmer and larger conceptual edifice, within which the separately completed parts could also receive their final theoretical status. Without this insight—almost at the last moment, one could say—Clausewitz's work would have remained truly a fragment.

It is relatively simple to follow the development of those central magnitudes in Clausewitz's thought which crystallized theoretically at first in his early opposition to geometric warfare. From the prioritization of the engagement vis-à-vis strategy arose the theory of war as struggle

[175] According to a fitting word by Kessel (*Genesis*, 405), who however does not always associate the fitting ideas with it and, by understanding Clausewitz's development linearly, overlooks the shift in viewpoint that enabled the final clarification.

(regardless of whether it concerns real or pure war); the priority consideration of moral magnitudes led into a general view of the actions and reactions of the human psyche, thus into an anthropology not systematically executed, yet firmly outlined and just as firmly advocated; the doctrine of friction, which turned at the beginning likewise against the geometric concept of a war planned in every respect, removed itself from its narrower military significance without, however, losing the same, and connected itself with Clausewitz's anthropology, so that friction could finally be understood as a concomitant phenomenon of human "deficiencies"; from the distance between tactics and strategy established from the beginning, reflections gradually resulted on the determining factors in strategy, i.e., on the "political purpose" of the war. This expression is significantly used already in 1804, when Clausewitz distinguished for the first time between purpose *of* the war and purpose *in* the war and moreover opined that the political purpose could be "of a double kind," thus either the annihilation of the opponent or his compulsion to accept certain peace conditions.[176] The hypothesis would thus not be aberrant that Clausewitz could have formulated an elementary war theory on the path of the further development and refinement of his original conceptual apparatus, which revolved around the antithetical pair of concepts "strategy-tactics," which would also largely take into account the political aspect of war. Thereby, however, this political aspect would have to limit itself only to subjective objectives and modes of action, i.e., it could never have become that general theory of "political intercourse" within which the war phenomenon was grasped against a broad anthropological and cultural-philosophical background, and indeed in all its historical possibilities. This line of Clausewitz's thought, however indispensable it may be, thus does not suffice in itself to make the final synthesis fully understandable. It was incidentally able to unfold fully only when it crossed with the second great line in the (later) thought of our theorist, namely that which was historically oriented in the sense that it sought to test the central concepts of the first-named line against the diversity of historically given wars; a central role was played thereby, for easily understandable reasons, by the question of the historical and theoretical status of the Napoleonic wars. Clausewitz's thought takes its decisive and final turn when, on the basis of historical reflection, it moves away from its original assessment of the Napoleonic wars, which was grown together with his original conceptual apparatus, and sees itself compelled at the same time to draw the theoretical consequences from this and to design a new, anthropologically and cultural-philosophically founded conceptual framework, within which the original central concepts are partly modified, partly generalized and partly shifted. Since in this theoretical turn historical viewpoints acted as a catalyst, Clausewitz's whole thought now received a pronouncedly historical and historicist, thus relativistic orientation,

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[176] *Strategie*, 51. Already in the early writing on *Gustav Adolphs Feldzüge* Clausewitz calls war "tool of political designs" (*Werke*, IX, 26; cf. 101 on the "inner relationship between Gustav Adolph's warlike enterprises and political purposes").

which also has praxeological consequences, since it means the turning away from the norms of warfare accepted earlier, inspired by Napoleon—and simultaneously from *every* norm.

Let us now follow this development along the guide of the transformation in the evaluation of the Napoleonic wars. As long as Clausewitz still stood under the impression of the great victories of Napoleon and thus of Napoleonic warfare, he was convinced that this would remain decisive also for the future. "The war of the present time is a war of all against all," he writes in 1812. "This character war will hardly change again, and it would truly not be to be wished that the old bloody and yet often boring chess game of the soldiers' battle ever returned". Centuries will indeed come in which peoples will no longer war against one another in this way, yet this is a perspective without practical relevance; for in these centuries every war will be viewed as a national affair and waged in this spirit.[177] Already in 1817, however, Clausewitz shows himself no longer so sure about the immediate future prospects of war. This time he bases his reflections on this on the totality of the historical manifestations of war[178] and, by relativizing the phenomenon of Napoleonic warfare through this historical mode of viewing, comes to the skeptical conclusion that one cannot prove from history that "a more decisive and rapid course... must remain the law of war also now" and just as little the opposite; the future must teach whether governments and peoples will be more cautious in war and whether wars will look accordingly, and also whether diplomacy will apply reins "to the rapid god of war," especially when after a generation the experiences of the last wars will have been lost.[179] The last sentence implies, of course, that the return to people's war and war of annihilation is considered fairly probable, even if by no means certain. Still more strongly does this probability emerge in one of the older parts of the main work, where it is surmised that, after the governments have become acquainted with "all these resources," it is not to be expected "that they will leave the same unused in future wars".[180] The tone changes again considerably, however, in the progress of the investigation. The return to people's war and war of annihilation is indeed never excluded, yet it is foreseen that the "majority" of wars "will incline again to the character of observation,"[181] that wars without decision, if not the absolute majority, so yet always "make up a large number of wars"[182] or that "a large part of the earlier war relations" will come to light again;[183] finally Clausewitz takes an intermediate position, according to which "it is just as unlikely that wars

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[177] *Bekenntnisschrift*, *Schriften*, 750; cf. p. 712, the sentence: "...after Guibert's prophecy has come true once...".
[178] See above note 58.
[179] *Ueber das Fortschreiten*, 238, 239.
[180] *Vom Kriege*, III, 17 = 413.
[181] *Op. cit.*, VI, 28 = 813.
[182] *Op. cit.*, VI, 30 = 834.
[183] *Op. cit.*, 856.

will henceforth have this grand character as that the wide barriers which have been opened to them can ever close again completely".[184]

Not Clausewitz's indecision regarding the future of war interests here, but merely the increasing inclination manifested thereby to relativize Napoleonic warfare, i.e., to conceive of it as only one among other equally possible forms of war. The indecision regarding the future hung together, moreover, with the recognition that in the past war had assumed very different forms. Seen in this way, the mentioned indecision testified to an awake historical sense. This sense breaks through when Clausewitz sets theory the task not so much to prophesy the future, but rather to explain the whole past, thus to bring all forms of war conceptually under a common denominator. The prioritizing of historical observation thus connects with theoretical questions and produces at the same time theoretical consequences. This had to be so, for Clausewitz had at the beginning of his intellectual development granted Napoleonic warfare a special theoretical status, he had namely viewed it as the conceivably extreme intensity in war and therefore as a theoretical norm and practical orientation point; Napoleonic war and war in general in its absolute form, unadulterated by any moderation, thus in its conceptual purity, seemed to coincide. The consistent historical observation of war in its divergent manifestations had to, however, unhinge this original concept. For the paradox arose that not all wars that really took place in the past could be subsumed under that concept of war which was distilled out of the Napoleonic model. Clausewitz had therefore either to leave the historical mode of viewing and thus the pre-revolutionary past largely aside (that would perhaps have been possible if he had been convinced that in future only wars of the Napoleonic type would take place) or else set up a new concept of war which encompassed both Napoleonic warfare in its whole intensity and the limited wars of the pre-revolutionary time. To be able to accomplish this logically, however, he had to discover commonalities between war types which until then appeared to him as *toto coelo* opposed. Should commonalities between Napoleonic and limited warfare be discovered, however, then neither of the two in itself would be able to represent the concept of war in general; a moving apart of Napoleonic warfare and general war concept was in other words necessary in order to subsume both that warfare and limited war under such a war concept which would contain in its formal generality and simultaneously highest concreteness the whole diversity of all historical manifestations of war.

The decisive turn in Clausewitz's thought occurs now in the moment in which a distinction is made clearly and programmatically between pure and Napoleonic war, whereby in the former certain constants are summarized, in order then on the basis of a deepened anthropological and cultural-philosophical reflection to derive all kinds of real war from these constants. The materials for this thought structure were already all present—there existed, that is, the concepts

[184] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 973.

of tactics, strategy and political purpose, the fundamental anthropological views, the theory of friction and of suspension, the doctrine of the double kind of war, etc. But only after the pure concept of war had been able to separate from all individual real war forms because it summarized them all in itself, and only after it thereby achieved a distinct ontological and epistemological status, was a deeper interpretation and a theoretically more ambitious combination of these materials made possible; what was earlier thought rather war-theoretically in the narrower sense now gains an anthropological and cultural-philosophical dimension, while the anthropological and cultural-philosophical insights, which were earlier presented in war-theoretical context or existed without systematic coherence side by side, now form a closed framework which serves as a reception site for all partial aspects of the war problem. This does *not* mean Clausewitz would have ceased to be a war theorist in order to become a "philosopher," but only that out of his war-theoretical perspective he came to those generalizations which he needed and had to need for the illumination of this same perspective, since he never forgot that war is prepared and led by men living in political intercourse. Without an elementary theory of "political intercourse" and of man he could therefore not get by.

Let us now consider how all this played out in sequence. That which we can call the somewhat bellicose-tinged Napoleonic normativism of Clausewitz retains the upper hand in the writings of his youth and in the older parts of the main work, above all in Books III, IV, and V. A normativism is involved here if only because not only is the general concept of war equated with Napoleonic warfare, but it is also striven to derive from that concept the norms of an ideal warfare, i.e., one which would stand in agreement with the concept of war itself. A passage may clarify this: "The principle of always choosing the most decisive operation that lies in the domain of our forces follows from the spirit and sense of the art of war, and one needs only to call this by its true name to make this plausible. It is the most advantageous use of the existing armed forces, thus everything that can be undertaken with these forces must really be undertaken".[185] In 1817 Clausewitz is still convinced that there have been campaigns in real wars which completely coincided with the concept of war as a rapid unified act; to them belonged admittedly almost all campaigns of Bonaparte as the military offspring of the French Revolution, which had asserted "the rights of the natural element" again.[186] Here there exists obviously no gap and no distance between the "natural element," as it is contained absolutely in the concept of war, and its actual unfolding in the real Napoleonic wars that took place. The same identity of the conceptual and the factual is assumed in some passages of the main work. In the Revolutionary War, it is said, and especially in the campaigns of Bonaparte, warfare attained "the unconditional degree of energy which we have regarded as the natural law of the

[185] *Strategie*, 53.
[186] *Ueber das Fortschreiten*, 234 f., 237.

element".[187] Or: In the newer wars, i.e., in all campaigns "that we have before our eyes for 25 years," the warlike element has acted with its whole energy.[188] The "monstrous change" of war in this period has thus practically eliminated every suspension in war: "Its elemental fire is so overwhelming, its energy so extraordinary, that those regular periods of rest have also disappeared, and all forces press toward the decision with unstoppable violence".[189] In the major battle, the core of Napoleonic warfare, the concept of war as "settlement of hostility, of hatred" seemed to Clausewitz to be completely realized, since here all activity unites "in bloody combat and all action is compressed into one point of space and time".[190] This was for him not only fact-finding, but simultaneously a guideline of every action if it wanted to orient itself consistently by the concept of war. Experience and concept of war, he opined, lead us equally "to seek a great decision only in a great battle".[191] Still more emphatically is the normative character of Napoleonic warfare highlighted following the above-cited statement that it had reached the unconditional degree of energy: "This degree is therefore possible, and if it is possible, so it is necessary".[192]

Precisely in the period in which Clausewitz still identified concept of war and Napoleonic warfare with one another, he expressed at the same time views which at least in their last logical consequence had to contradict this identification. He knew always that despite all realization of the war concept in Napoleonic warfare, there had been wars in which suspension outweighed the actual warlike action (by far). This phenomenon he traced primarily to general anthropological causes ("timidity and indecision of the human spirit," "imperfection of human insight"),[193] whereby the question had to pose itself why then these general human properties showed their effect only e.g. with the cabinets, but not without exception with all belligerents. But if one posed the question thus, then it had also to be admitted that suspension is to be found in all wars, albeit in varying measure. Clausewitz found himself here in a dilemma. For despite all statement of the "quite different character" of today's wars, he could not help but regard as "certain" that the actual action "will be interrupted by more or less long pauses";[194] moreover, he knew "how many gradations are conceivable in the state of tension as well as of rest".[195] Finally, it had struck him that even in the newer time a great battle decided indeed "frequently" over a

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[187] *Vom Kriege*, III, 16 = 407.
[188] *Op. cit.*, V, 13 = 566.
[189] *Op. cit.*, V, 9 = 548 f.
[190] *Op. cit.*, IV, 11 = 468, 469.
[191] *Op. cit.*, 470.
[192] *Op. cit.*, III, 16 = 408.
[193] *Op. cit.*
[194] *Op. cit.*, III, 18 = 414.
[195] *Op. cit.*, 415.

whole campaign, but in the "rarest exceptional cases" over a whole war.[196] Mindful of this empirical state of affairs, there arose the highly unpleasant theoretical constellation that the concept of war, as long as it was bound to a certain real warfare, was not worth much for the characteristic of all others. Clausewitz felt a discomfort thereby, which he formulated as follows: "The more war becomes a half-thing, the more the theory of the same lacks the necessary fixed points and abutments for its reasoning, the necessary becomes ever less, the accidental ever more".[197]

The question of a new concept of war which would no longer be condemned to push wide areas of historical reality helplessly off into the sphere of chance or the incomprehensible posed itself all the more urgently, the more strongly theoretical concern oriented itself at the historical problem. In this way the train of thought described above *in abstracto* got in motion, which found its conclusion in the fundamental distinction between concept of war and Napoleonic warfare and simultaneously in the theoretical unification of all types of war (from war of annihilation to armed observation) in the sign of the concept of "pure war." In Book VIII of the main work, both the train of thought, albeit still in somewhat aporetic form, and its conclusion, although still somewhat tentative, are well preserved for us. Clausewitz says here explicitly that a theory which is adequate to only one, i.e., the most energetic, war form cannot satisfy: "One would thus with a theory that lingered only in this absolute war either exclude all cases where alien influences alter its nature or condemn them as errors. This cannot be the purpose of theory, which is supposed to be the doctrine of a war not according to ideal, but under real conditions".[198] The dilemma is formulated as follows: either the appearance of the Napoleonic wars leads us back to the concept of war, i.e., the latter is set up exclusively on the basis of the former, whereby we must judge all wars, however much they remove themselves from it, according to it and derive all demands of theory from it—or else we do not do this and orient ourselves instead at the whole historical diversity of war phenomena: "We must decide in this now," writes Clausewitz, and this sentence eloquently expresses his feeling that he was at a turning point of his entire war-theoretical thought. But he also knows exactly the implications of the decision to be made: "If we decide for the former, our theory will everywhere approach the necessary more, be more a clear, settled matter. But what shall we then say to all wars which have been waged since Alexander and some campaigns of the Romans down to Bonaparte? We had to reject them in bulk and yet could perhaps not do so without being ashamed of our arrogance. But what is bad, we had to say to ourselves that in the next decade perhaps a war of that kind will be there again, despite our theory, and that this theory with a strong logic remains very powerless against the violence of circumstances. We will thus have to agree to construct

[196] *Op. cit.*, IV, 11 = 470.
[197] *Op. cit.*, III, 16 = 410.
[198] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 973; cf. already VI, 28 = 813.

war, as it ought to be, not out of its mere concept, but to leave its place to everything alien that mixes into it and attaches to it, to all natural gravity and friction of the parts, to the whole inconsequence, lack of clarity and timidity of the human spirit; we will have to grasp the view that war and the shape which one gives it proceeds from ideas, feelings and relationships prevailing at the moment, indeed we must, if we want to be completely true, concede that this has been the case even where it assumed its absolute shape, namely under Bonaparte".[199]

The short meaning of this long passage reads: the identification of war concept and Napoleonic war sounds tempting because we thereby arrive at a theoretical generalization on the most direct and simple path; the logic underlying this generalization is indeed *prima vista* captivating and compelling, but in reality superficial and misleading, since it must entail an arrogant neglect of history both in the dimension of the past and in that of the future; if we want to do justice to history, we must recognize and acknowledge that the anthropological constants that call forth suspension in war are effective not only with the cabinets, but with all human subjects acting in war—if they are constants at all; Napoleonic warfare thus is subject, albeit in varying extent, to the same laws as every other warfare too and can therefore for its part be subsumed under a concept of war which can be abstracted not exclusively from it, but from all real wars. Accordingly, Clausewitz avoids henceforth the earlier identification of war concept (as abstract summary of the fully unfolded "unconditional energy") and Napoleonic warfare, and limits himself to the observation that since Bonaparte war has "approached its true nature... very much".[200] Still more: he changes his terminology by silently dropping the concept of "absolute war," which according to his own statement he had abstracted from Napoleonic warfare,[201] and replacing it in the later reworked first parts of the work with others, as it were unburdened ones. The contrast absolute-real war is no longer used,[202] and the general war concept is now called "mere," "pure," "strict" or "original concept".[203] The fundamental discovery of Book VIII, namely that no real war can coincide with the concept of war, is repeated *ipsis verbis* also in the reworked Book I, where it is said that real wars could merely "come very close" to the abstract war concept or "approach" it.[204]

A point of great importance must now be precisely understood. By subsuming the Napoleonic or war of annihilation alongside the limited forms of real war and together with these under the concept of pure war, Clausewitz recognizes automatically that the war of annihilation belongs

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[199] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 2 = 954.
[200] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 972; cf. VIII, 6B = 997 f.: war "has suffered significant changes which have brought it closer to its absolute form".
[201] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3A = 959; cf. VIII, 2 = 954 (above).
[202] Cf. the title of VIII, 2.
[203] See above note 25.
[204] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 214; I, 1, § 25 = 211.

to the historical reality of war just as much as every other, thus is to be reckoned with if objective relations do not exclude it. The transition from pure war to real is conditioned, as we know,[205] by the mere existence of a "civilized state" or a "political intercourse," and therefore it has nothing to do with a political good will that succeeds in eradicating the war of annihilation from political intercourse—stated differently: the distance between pure and war of annihilation is indeed smaller than that between pure and limited, nevertheless it remains always present, and indeed independent of the will of the respectively acting subjects, indeed even if these would possibly gladly abolish it. It is therefore not at all necessary that the "pure" or abstract concept of war be realized so that wars of annihilation can take place; the admitted impossibility of the realization of the pure concept of war in the civilized state m.o.w. excludes the possibility of wars of annihilation by no means. Completely misleading therefore is the assumption widespread in the literature that the (alleged) ideality or abstractness of pure war would *eo ipso* push the war of annihilation into the realm of fiction. Here two different levels of theory are confused with one another, which of course amounts to a total disregard of their anthropological and cultural-philosophical background.[206]

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[205] See above Section 2, esp. p. 16 ff.

[206] Aron's overall position is also contradictory, who on the one hand notes the distinction between absolute and real war made in Book VIII and knows that the theory is unified only by the insight that all real wars, including wars of annihilation, have political character (*Penser la guerre*, I, 121, 409 f., 434) - on the other hand, however, he is not clear about the subtleties of the transition from the absolute war of Book VIII to the pure war of I, 1 as well as about the structure of this latter, and therefore can neither pose nor solve the question of the transition from pure to real war, since its anthropological and cultural-philosophical background completely escapes him. As a moderating factor, therefore, only politics in the subjective sense of the modes of action of civilian authorities remains. But if the transition from pure to real war is understood as the effect of such politics, then this latter must always and essentially act in a moderating way, whereby it can no longer be explained what can bring about the transition from limited war to war of annihilation *within* real war. The established finding of the distinction between absolute (pure) and real war as well as the insight into the political character of all wars are thus factually reversed, and the war of annihilation is pushed aside next to the pure one into the sphere of the fictitious; eloquently, Aron accuses Clausewitz that when he designates the war of annihilation as political, he thinks exclusively of politics in the objective sense of political intercourse (I, 410) - politics in the subjective sense must thus apparently always act moderately. In this theoretical inability to make the war of annihilation comprehensible lies the great weakness of Aron's argumentation. Hepp has already pointed this out, but he does Aron, who basically did not deny the political character of the war of annihilation, partly injustice, and furthermore comes to the correct conclusion by using a too linear and simplistic syllogistics. Thus he lags behind Aron when, in his otherwise justified endeavor to prove the real possibility of the war of annihilation, he does not perceive the distance between pure and absolute or war of annihilation and derives the reality of the pure concept of war from the reality of the Napoleonic wars (*Der harmlose Cl.*, 400 f.). This is inadmissible if only because the pure concept of war is contained in *all* real wars, and not only in the war of annihilation (as was the case as long as Clausewitz still identified absolute concept of war and Napoleonic war with each other). Hepp, who displays little understanding for the developmental-historical aspect in Clausewitz's thought, does not recognize that in the last phase of this thought development, the pure concept detached

We said that the positing of the concept of "*pure*" war goes hand in hand with the insight that the anthropological causes of standstill in war operate in every real war, though each time to a different extent. Thus a long reflection on this question reaches its conclusion—one that began when Clausewitz, *against* geometrical warfare, asserted the moral magnitudes and, parallel to them, the incalculability of acts of war. That a commander to whom "the whole strategic calculus" applies is "an extremely rare case in the history of war," he had already observed early on.[207] He lamented that so many writers "completely forget the friction of the entire machine" in war, and demanded a correct conception of the course of most incidents in war… "of the manifold contingencies with which everything is interwoven, and of the many difficulties that stand in the way of the precise execution of systematic arrangements such as theory is accustomed to sketch"; in war, he emphasized, execution lags behind theory more than anywhere else.[208] Originally, then, friction is grasped in the narrower, war-theoretical sense, i.e. as the distance between plan and execution, as the effect of certain unforeseen or uncertain factors that have to do with one's own or the enemy's army. Yet the reduction of friction to anthropological constants did not wait long to appear; Clausewitz in this context speaks of the "feeling of anxiousness which in general easily befalls human beings when carrying out great things," and adds: "the great mass of men is of a timorous nature, and hence there arises a regular exaggeration of danger".[209] Significantly, he resorts to the same mode of explanation when a few years later, in a programmatic essay, he sets himself the task of explaining standstill in war. Alongside the superiority of the defensive, ignorance about the enemy's situation and fear of the great decision[210] appear here as the reasons that condition the deviation of the real, actually occurring war from its essence ("rapid irresistible action, an irresistible advance toward the goal, i.e. a violent, bloody, swiftly ended, decisive combat").[211] Thus a fusion takes place between the problematic of friction and that of standstill in war, although friction and standstill are not necessarily identical (the former always presupposes a distance between plan and execution, which is not constitutive for the latter: standstill may, namely, also be planned and *willed*). But Clausewitz is concerned above all with their common denominator, since his first theoretical concern is with the reasons that detach the concept of war from its reality. At this point the considerations emerge that lead on the one hand to "pure" war and on the other to "political" war. Clausewitz remarks that friction and chance are most effective where "the entire

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itself from the idea of the Napoleonic wars and was simultaneously placed on a broad anthropological and cultural-philosophical basis, which had been erected in a methodologically admirable way. To be able to prove the real possibility and the doubly political character of the war of annihilation - *with* Clausewitz and against Aron - one does not have to amputate Clausewitz as a theorist.

[207] *Gustav Adolphs Feldzüge*, *Werke*, IX, 40.

[208] *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 413 f., 445.

[209] *Die wichtigsten Grundsätze des Kriegführens...*, in: *Vom Kriege*, 1081.

[210] See above note 58.

[211] *Ueber das Fortschreiten*, 234.

act of war cannot be compressed into a single main action"[212]. In the absolute compression of the act of war—as it is ideally, namely as heightened reality, contained in the concept of pure war—there can therefore be no friction and no standstill. In the simple duel, where two hate-filled enemies fall upon each other to annihilate each other, the narrowness of time and space, as well as the immediate pressure to act under which both sides stand, leaves no room for standstill; it permits no maneuver and no weakness. Only the feeling of enmity, which calls war forth at all, may and can unfold here. Yet time and space expand considerably, and the "clumsy machine composed of a hundred thousand parts" as a "single individual" and to "individualize the entire immense act of war into a kind of duel".[213] In the innumerable free spaces that arise between the tens of thousands of components of this fragmented and yet unified whole of war, only those anthropological properties can flourish that condition standstill and friction, while at the same time bearing an important aspect of "political intercourse." In the form of standstill and friction, therefore, political intercourse itself enters into the events of war. It is not accidental that Clausewitz mentions (human) inertia and friction side by side when discussing the reasons that make pure war into political war.[214] Through the extension of the concept of friction such that it could be connected with a fundamental aspect of human nature, and thereby with the constitution of the "social condition" or of "political intercourse" in its complexity, a great step is taken toward the unification of the theory; war-theoretical and culture-theoretical magnitudes merge, and the interweaving of war and politics deepens.[215]

This interpretation of Clausewitz's intellectual development agrees in every respect with his own statements about it. First, it confirms what no commentator disputes, though most interpret incorrectly—namely, his claim that the first chapter of the first book is the only one

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[212] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 7 = 1001.

[213] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 1 = 950.

[214] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 23 = 209 f.

[215] The importance of the friction problem for Clausewitz's intellectual development has been emphasized by Kessel (*Genesis*, 410), although he understood neither its anthropological and cultural-philosophical background nor the difference between absolute and pure war nor the sense in which the concept of pure war is abstract (Kessel says "fictitious"). Precisely with regard to this importance of the friction problem, Schering's assumption must be rejected that the juxtaposition of absolute (apparently the pure is meant here) and real war corresponds to the contrast between occurrence, to which merely instinctive action can also be assigned, and purposive-rational action (*Kriegsphilosophie*, 37). For the friction, which stands in the way of an identification of pure and real war, does not spring from purposive-rational action, but is the product of what Clausewitz calls human weakness and inertia. It is true that purposive-rational action is only possible in the cultured state, i.e. in real war, but only in its mixture with irrational emotional forces, as we explained in the analysis of Clausewitz's concept of reason (see above Section 2, p. 24 ff.). The definitional connection of real, i.e. political war and purposive-rational action leads astray because it can create the impression that the "moderation" of real war in comparison to pure war is the product of conscious goal-setting.

"which I consider completed",[216] which therefore contains the definitive results to which Clausewitz came concerning the essence and the historical forms of appearance of war, as well as the reasons for the transition from pure to real war. Second, it enables us for the first time to understand adequately his own assessment of Book VIII. Clausewitz describes the chapters of this book as a "mere rough working-through of the mass… in order to become fully aware in the work itself what is essential. This purpose they have fulfilled".[217] This is to say that Book VIII has an experimental character, that the question here was to clarify something fundamental (do Napoleonic warfare and the concept of war coincide, or is even the former subject to friction—such that wars of annihilation must be placed alongside other real wars, and indeed *as wars*?). Beyond this it also means that the thought-experiment succeeded and the sought solution was found, even though the text itself was not written from the outset in the light of this solution and thus retained its experimental or ambiguous character even after the purpose for which it was written had been fulfilled. We know what was clarified in this text; but we also know that in it traces of the earlier view—which identified the concept of war with Napoleonic warfare—are still present; symbolically this is represented by the subsequently abandoned term "absolute war." Given this character of the text transmitted to us, we must assume that Clausewitz—contrary to his original plans[218]—never reworked Book VIII.[219] Much more likely, immediately after the successful clarification of the fundamental issue, and in his understandable haste to secure it, he rewrote the first chapter of the first book anew and presumably also reworked some parts of Book I and Book II, all the more since after 1827 he devoted himself primarily to studies in the history of war.[220] Decisive remains, in any case, that Book VIII and the completed chapter of Book I form an intellectual unity in the sense that in the former the basic conception was gropingly and aporetically developed that underlies the latter. In any case, there can be no talk of the primacy of politics being recognized and grounded only in the completed first chapter of the first book:[221] for the most important new insight of Book

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[216] *Vom Kriege*, 181.

[217] *Op. cit.*, 180 (Note of 10.7.1827).

[218] *Op. cit.*

[219] Kessel (*Genesis*, 413, note 30) has rightly defended this view against Rosinski and Schering, albeit for different reasons. This point remains nevertheless of minor importance if we consider Book VIII and I, 1 as a conceptual unit (see below).

[220] See the letters from Clausewitz to Gröben from the years 1829 and 1830 published *ibid.*

[221] This is claimed by Rosinski (*Die Entwicklung*, esp. 286, 288), who even assumes a "radical break" in the transition from Book VIII to I, 1. However, he bases this assumption on no content analysis of the texts, but draws immediate content conclusions from Clausewitz's statement about I, 1 as the only completed chapter of the main work. Moreover, Clausewitz himself made no indication in his last posthumous note on the state of his work that the views contained in I, 1 would render other parts of the work obsolete; on the contrary, surveying the whole he assures: "I consider the main lineaments which one sees prevailing in these materials to be the correct ones in the view of war" (*Vom Kriege*, 181). An inner contradiction in Rosinski's argumentation consists in the fact that he believes in a revision of Book VIII after 1827 and

VIII—that even war of annihilation is subject to friction—meant nothing other than the thesis that all real wars are phenomena of political intercourse, and as such must be interwoven with all aspects of human nature as this nature, in its entirety, objectifies itself in political intercourse. This is, to be sure, difficult to understand if one misinterprets and trivializes the primacy of politics in Clausewitz as the uncontested domination of the definitionally "civil" government over the equally definitionally rough-and-tumble military.

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simultaneously claims that only in I, 1 did Clausewitz change his position in the sense of a clear primacy of politics: but the said primacy is already emphasized in the note of 1827, which rather confirms our interpretation of Book VIII as well as our impression that it was written in its present aporetic and experimental form *before* this note, which it could not have if it had been revised in the light of already established results. Schering too, who appreciates the importance of Book VIII as the text in which a struggle for a new conception takes place, believes he must determine a new shift in viewpoint in the transition from Book VIII to I, 1 and thinks that the dualistic plan designed in Book VIII (separation of absolute and real war as well as of the two types of war from each other) was replaced in I, 1 by a "trialistic" one, which is reflected in the trinity formula (*Wehrphilosophie*, esp. 252 ff.; cf. *Kriegsphilosophie*, 20 ff.). We know, however, that no independent definition or theory of war can be derived from this formula (see above note 84) and just as little a constant and undisputed primacy of the consciously moderately acting "political intelligence". Aron has tried to combine this interpretation of the trinity formula with Rosinski's developmental-historical hypotheses, and accordingly he thinks the final insight of Clausewitz, clearly formulated only in I, 1, is that the warmaker does not have to want to destroy his opponent, from which he constructs a contrast between Book VIII and I, 1 (*Penser la guerre*, I, 355 f., and *Verd. Anwalt*, 296). But the observation that annihilation does not always have to be the purpose of war and that there is a double type of war was familiar to Clausewitz from his early period, and precisely it tormented his theoretical consciousness (see above note 176); in the late phase of his thought development it was only satisfactorily justified - and indeed not by the realization that the political leadership in the state acts or should act in the sense of the second type of war, i.e. moderatingly, but by the fact that the war of annihilation is therefore just as much real and political war as all others because it too must be subject to the objective effect of friction.

5. The Historical Mode of Observation and the Theory of Action

As just shown, the concern to do justice to the diversity of historical phenomena was a main driving force in the shaping of Clausewitz's mature theory. For our theorist, history was not a mere reservoir from which to scoop examples that might be able to clarify a special state of affairs but possess no general probative force in themselves;[222] rather, it was the source and the permanent reference point of an independent mode of observation that connects with specific theoretical and praxeological consequences. This historical mode of observation separated Clausewitz from his Napoleonic normativism, and simultaneously from any normativism, to lead him to a descriptive view of the war phenomenon. Although the last logical consequences of the historical mode of observation only came to light in the final phase of Clausewitz's intellectual development, the inclination toward it was strongly pronounced from the beginning, and it gave him no rest until finally the narrow framework of the Napoleonic pattern was burst, which was not capable of absorbing all historical manifestations of war. With regard to the late multidimensional theoretical synthesis, it is therefore true that it does not simply lean on the experiences of the Napoleonic wars; Clausewitz, after all, worked through no fewer than 130 campaigns.[223] If within this synthesis the Napoleonic experiences are now relativized, both the appeal to the Napoleonic pattern and the historical mode of observation initially served the same goal (which is why their inner logical contradiction did not immediately catch the eye): they jointly fought the then-prevailing version of the geometric art of war and its claim to establish universally valid rules of war and thereby, as it were, to abstract from the human material of war. It was obvious to mobilize the "moral magnitudes" against this view,[224] which raised the question of their political origin and shaping, thus ultimately the question of the political character of war, and on the other hand to assert the fact of the historically attested diversity of wars, which in turn promoted a relativistic and simultaneously anti-intellectualistic attitude, as it articulated itself in the doctrines of war as art and of the tact of judgment as the only reliable guideline of action.

Even in the first period of his Napoleonic normativism, Clausewitz was preserved by his fine historical feeling[225] from treating warfares of the past condescendingly—all the more so as they gave the lie to the geometric ideals of his theoretical opponents. He did not hesitate to defend Gustavus Adolphus as a commander against those who missed the "later unfolded art" in a war

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[222] Cf. Clausewitz's remarks on this, *Vom Kriege*, II, 6 = 339.

[223] Linnebach, *Die wissensch. Methode*, 487; cf. Schering, *Kriegsphil.*, 66 f.

[224] On such approaches in Clausewitz's immediate intellectual milieu see Nohn, "Moralische Größen".

[225] According to an expression by Delbrück, *Aufsätze*, 215, who however assumes a never overcome contradiction between this feeling and the fact that Clausewitz had abstracted his "law" (namely the destruction of the enemy armed forces and therefore the battle as the only decisive moment) from Napoleonic warfare "like Lessing the laws of poetry from Homer".

like the Thirty Years' War, and he did this mindful of the deployment of moral magnitudes in that war, although he otherwise knew that Gustavus Adolphus was no bold invasion and battle commander, but rather loved maneuvering.[226] In a fragment[227] in which general conclusions are evidently drawn from the study of the Thirty Years' War at that time, we read that the various great wars form just as many epochs in the history of the art and differ according to people, customs, usages, the political situation, and the spirit of the nations. Through this insight, Clausewitz wants to counteract the absolutization of unconditional and one-sided standpoints. Whoever loses himself in the views of his age is inclined "to always consider the newest as the best... it is impossible for him to do the extraordinary": the relativization of the prevailing view is thus here still felt as one's own liberation for independent activity. Finally, Clausewitz wants to find out what "real reason(s)" called forth the different character of the Thirty Years' War and the Cabinet Wars. He searches, therefore, for the peculiar in every historical epoch and the specific causality underlying it, whereby he is able to win an interesting side from every phenomenon precisely in its independence. "The study of history has convinced me... that in all times one encounters war phenomena that are worth just as much in spirit as the most beautiful campaigns of our centuries," he writes on the occasion of some reflections on the art of war of the Middle Ages and the principle of honor supporting it. He knows that the uniqueness of phenomena must pull the ground from under superficial comparisons and dogmatic claims,[228] and that it is impossible to conjure up past times and conditions or to fully empathize with the situation and the way of thinking of long-extinct peoples and cultures.[229] He certainly does not doubt that there are large and recognizable lines of development in history,[230] yet this has absolutely nothing to do with a belief in a necessary progress or in firmly gained results of the historical course. On the contrary. He thinks that "everything in this world is subject to change,"[231] and his manly gaze seeks no backing in transcendence either; rather, he transfers his fundamental view that "the most sublime works of the civil condition, in however many centuries they may live on and work, yet carry the principle of their own destruction within themselves," to the (positive) religions and finds none that "could last eternally," not a single one that would not be undermined and collapsed "by the very principles that initially gave it

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[226] *Gustav Adolphs Feldzüge*, *Werke*, IX, esp. 19, 29, 47.

[227] It was called "Views from the History of the Thirty Years' War" and was in the literary estate; its content is reported by Rothfels, *C. v. Clausewitz*, 61 f.

[228] Quoted in Rothfels, *op. cit.*, 162; Cf. *Turenne*, § 27 *Werke*, IX, 228.

[229] Thus he has no use for those revolutionaries who rave about ancient constitutions which they do not understand and which generally no one understands anymore after 2-3000 years, *Umtriebe*, Polit. Schriften, 166.

[230] Thus he offers a solid, though not original, summary of the development that brought about the decline of the nobility and the rise of the middle class, *op. cit.*, 153 ff.

[231] *Op. cit.*, 155.

strength and greatness".[232] We may indeed assume that the absence of (theoretically relevant) religious belief and the observation of human things from the view of the thought of power are the two natural counterparts of Clausewitz's historically relativistic basic attitude.

In view of this maturity and depth of Clausewitz's historical mode of observation, it is not surprising that, standing already on the threshold of the final formulation of his theory, he understands and poses the questions moving him as historical questions. Thus the central aporia about friction or the suspension in war ("whence arise the many pauses in the warlike act, are they essential parts of the same or true anomalies?") is thought in one breath with the question which of all known historical forms of war corresponds most to the "matter," i.e., the concept of war, whereby the way out is sought not in a direct answering of this latter question, but rather in a shift of the questioning itself in the sense of a historical relativism: "Or is the nature of war conditioned by the nature of the relations, and what are these relations and these conditions?"[233] The incorporation of war into the "great whole" of political intercourse means precisely the establishment of a close connection between the nature of war and the nature of relations. It corresponds to the inner logic of this position that Clausewitz sets up his famous formula programmatically for the first time in Book VIII of the main work, after he has described the manifestations of war in the various historical epochs in unusual detail shortly before and emphasized that all these epochs waged war "in their own way..., differently, with different means and toward a different goal" and that "every age had its own wars, its own limiting conditions, its own bias".[234] The statement that only through the observation of war as a continuation of political intercourse can one consider all wars "as things of one kind" stands in no contradiction with this historical relativism.[235] In the light of the analyses of the previous section, this can be explained effortlessly: wars of annihilation form a part of political intercourse and are therefore subject to friction just as much as all other real wars. The unification of wars on the level of theory and on the basis of the criterion of friction thus presupposes the observation of the historical rootedness of the various wars in specific political relations; precisely with regard to this rootedness can the presence of friction be explained at all. Just as little is historical relativism in contradiction with the establishment of a "pure concept of war." This establishment constitutes in itself a methodological necessity: it must be shown what a pure war, i.e., a war without friction is, so that it can be made clear at all what friction in war means and how it comes about in the "civilized condition." The pure concept of war, however, orients itself—in contrast to the previous "absolute war" inspired by Napoleon—not on any special shape of the historical diversity of wars, it thus does not abolish their relativity, but it is

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[232] *Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1807/8*, Polit. Schriften, 51 f.
[233] See the fragment "New Center of Gravity of the Theory of War", *Geist und Tat*, 309.
[234] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 3B = 962 ff.; the cited sentences are on p. 962 and 973.
[235] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 992.

constructed by means of magnitudes that are *not* relative, i.e., must have lasting existential character at least insofar as they are to be found in one way or another in all human subjects who wage war. The structure of the finished first chapter of the first book leaves, moreover, no doubt about the inner logical connection of the mentioned three levels of thought (historical relativism, theoretical unification of historical diversity through the reference to the decisive significance of the factor "political intercourse," establishment of the "pure concept of war"), as just described. Here, namely, pure war, the necessary deviation from it in political intercourse, and the diversity of the historical manifestations of war are thematized simultaneously, whereby a connection in the sense explained above is even expressly established between the two latter levels: only the view that war is a political instrument shows us "how different wars must be according to the nature of their motives and the relations out of which they proceed".[236]

Let us turn now to the praxeological consequences of the historical mode of observation. It is evident that the relativism inherent to this latter is logically difficult to reconcile with a normativistic attitude—and it can be proven that Clausewitz also recognized this negative connection. History is for him no *magistra vitae*, thus no source of normatively usable doctrines; it exercises judgment, to be sure, but it yields no "formulas" and offers no "principles, rules, or methods".[237] A theory that orients itself on a normatively mute history or rests on a relativizing and relativistic mode of observation, however, can ultimately have only a strictly descriptive character and must abstain from any concrete instruction for action. It cannot and will not be a lodestar for the actor, whose decision, as we shall see immediately, remains left to the "tact of judgment." Of course, Clausewitz's position did not exhibit this coherence from the beginning. He speaks of the tact of judgment and of the impossibility of a truly binding prescriptive theory early on, yet such speeches are not yet in systematic connection with his historical approach, but are rather meant polemically, i.e., they turn against the theoretical claim of the representatives of geometric warfare. The "forward-driving" discord in the earlier phase of his intellectual development lies therefore in the fact that on the one hand he brings relativistic motives into play against the just-mentioned war-theoretical direction, while on the other hand he pays homage to a Napoleonic normativism and sets up "ought-sentences" or also "must-sentences," which are obviously falsely formulated ought-sentences.[238] We are interested here in the first and more promising side of this discord, and above all in the relativization of any prescriptive theory effected by the constant reference to naturally incalculable magnitudes. The highlighting of the role of chance or of the changing mental constitution of the troops turned, after all,

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[236] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 27 = 212.

[237] *Op. cit.*, VI, 30 = 858.

[238] "One should conduct war with the highest degree of necessary or possible effort"; "that one must not merely concentrate one's forces in time and space in general, but that one must successively bring all one's activity as much as possible to one and the same point...", *Strategie*, 51, 48; cf. above note 185.

against the claim of geometric war theory to reduce the war occurrence to the calculable and to found norms of behavior on it; the functioning of norms is dependent on exact calculability, and therefore the assertion of the incalculable had to eventually ruin normative claims of any kind. Clausewitz even found that theory at the practically decisive points was "perhaps quite impossible," e.g. regarding the engagement, for "the subjective nature of the commander... and the effect of moral magnitudes appear here incessantly in the series of the most important deciding reasons".[239] He noted that the theoretical systematizations of the geometric art of war only appeared on the scene when the Revolutionary Wars had already created a new reality, that they thus only dissected a corpse and led to the "mannered": "always the war books have come too late, and at all times they have represented dead manner".[240] Theory can thus only be a retrospective summary of the rules of the past, no exact determination of the norms of the future. When Clausewitz set about writing the main work, it was for him a truth long since settled that the art of war "can actually prescribe little" to the commander.[241]

We know that the mentioned contradiction in Clausewitz's thought was finally resolved by the elimination of Napoleonic normativism. After all that he had meanwhile brought forward against the practical value and the possibility of theory in general, however, the question arose for him as to the sense and the limits of his own theorizing. Here too Clausewitz came to the only consistent conclusion: the contrast between theory and practice could only be bridged if theory is conceived as "observation" and not as "doctrine".[242] This genial turn implied that only the renunciation of an authoritative normative claim could enable theory to grasp practice appropriately. The reconciliation of theory and practice on the level of theory was thus only the reverse side of the far-reaching irrelevance of theory for practice on the level of practice. This was obvious, of course, as soon as one separated the two levels cleanly from one another and at the same time became aware of the radical difference of the two mental attitudes corresponding to the two levels: if the tact of judgment was the practitioner's only helper in need (s. b.), then of course no solid theory could be built up by this same tact of judgment. Clausewitz was a war theorist and at the same time a warrior, and it naturally cost him some effort to recognize the two modes of observation in their peculiarity and to learn to keep them apart. The initial confusion, which was created by the double need to express oneself theoretically and parallel to that to question the possibility of systematic theories of the art of war, cleared up when warrior and war theorist separated from one another and it was realized that the impossibility of a theoretical guidance of practice by no means meant the impossibility of its theoretical grasping—quite on the contrary even. Clausewitz was capable of such methodologically and

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[239] *Op. cit.*, 80.
[240] *Op. cit.*, 72.
[241] *Ueber das Fortschreiten*, 239.
[242] *Vom Kriege*, II, 2 = 290, 292.

epistemologically groundbreaking insights because he, in direct contrast to normativistically oriented thinkers, could make three fundamental and neuralgic distinctions. First, he separated theoretical and practical goals from one another and opined that science distinguished itself from poetry and from real life by the fact that its purpose is contained within itself; "whoever enters into the territory of science must have no goal at all. For this would be nothing but a preconceived opinion, thus something quite alien to science".[243] Second, he kept valuations and causal explanations apart and found it meaningful, e.g., to accompany the description of an event with the remark: "We say this not to express praise or blame thereby..., but only to find the causes of the events in the bare state of things".[244] And third, he knew how far apart moral and historical-political observation lie, as for instance when he directed the question to the moralizing advocates of a restoration of Poland: "why do they want to view the partition of this country and its downfall as a state from a moral and not from a historical-political point of view?"[245]

The doctrine of the incalculability of fundamental factors of action, which at the beginning was directed against the normative claim of geometric war theory, became independent and deepened gradually, to finally constitute a natural component of the historically relativistic mode of observation. Clausewitz's general view of human action complements itself seamlessly with his view of the character and function of scientific theory as well as with his descriptive theory of the possibilities of practice. The fundamental incalculability of human action lies not only in its emotional motivation and associated fluctuation (for man in his practical action can never be a mere "automaton of duties"),[246] but just as much in the peculiar concatenation, crossing, mutual inhibition or interaction of individual actions. "All moral magnitudes" are therefore extremely difficult to estimate and moreover "the realm of possible events, the series of consequences which an action produces, is infinite and the finite result of this whole calculation is thus also never to be reached for the human understanding".[247] The uncertainty stems from the fact that "all action is performed, so to speak, in a mere twilight, which in addition not infrequently gives things an exaggerated scope, a grotesque appearance like a fog or moonlight illumination".[248] As a form of human action, war too is "the territory of chance,"[249] "the territory of uncertainty; three quarters of those things upon which action in war is built lie

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[243] *Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1807/8*, Polit. Schriften, 53.
[244] *Der Feldzug von 1796 in Italien*, § 3 *Werke*, III, 13.
[245] *Die Verhältnisse Europas seit der Teilung Polens*, Polit. Schriften, 223.
[246] *Die Feldzüge von 1799*, § 81 *Werke*, VI, 222.
[247] *Ueber die künftigen Kriegs-Operationen Preußens..., Schriften*, 78.
[248] *Vom Kriege*, II, 2 = 289.
[249] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 = 234; cf. *Aufzeichnungen aus dem Jahre 1809*, Polit. Schriften, 75 ("the gamble which prevails in every war").

in the fog of a more or less great uncertainty".[250] Under these circumstances, of course, a "positive doctrine" of action is impossible[251] and the formulation of laws of the art of war *in abstracto* is pointless, for these laws do not work unhindered in a vacuum, but, as the young Clausewitz already noted, they "connect themselves instantly with the circumstances with which they come into even the slightest contact".[252] In vain will one therefore search for a prescribed orientation in action derived from fixed and established laws: "In the political world there is no certainty, but one must be content with a more or less high degree of probability".[253] If one takes into account the one-sided and limited perspective of the subjects of the action, then this relativism must assume an even more radical form: "The truth of a political or moral reasoning is nothing but probability, thus capable of manifold degrees, which for two people are not always one and the same".[254] The reconciliation with the fact of this relativity of cognitions and perspectives has at least the practical advantage that the inclusion of all variations and probabilities into the calculation promises a good success, whereas he who holds fast to alleged certainties "finally follows his wishes and thereby is easy prey for his enemy".[255] Action, also in war, must in short orient itself according to the "average probability" and cannot use the concept of law.[256]

The question now arises whether one can do anything with the "positive results of the theoretical investigation" for practical intent, although they can never be used as "laws and norms" and lack generality and absolute truth all the more, the more they become positive doctrine. A practical use, thinks Clausewitz, they can indeed find, yet this is not a predictable and determinable one, it depends namely not so much on the content of these results as the descriptive theorist presents it, but rather on the mental agility and receptivity of the actor. The results of the theoretical investigation can, in other words, only serve as "support for the judgment" of the actor;[257] since "absolute truth" is out of the question here, theory is there not "to form the practical man," "to educate his judgment," than to assist him "directly" in the exercise of his business.[258] The structure of reality, as it is recognized from the view of historical relativism, permits no successful activity of an intellect generalizing beyond the concrete case, which builds its calculation on fixed, determined magnitudes.[259] The peculiarity of the case,[260]

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[250] *Vom Kriege*, I, 3 = 233; cf. *Die Feldzüge Friedrichs*, § 20 *Werke*, X, 65.
[251] *Vom Kriege*, II, 2 = 289.
[252] *Gustav Adolphs Feldzüge*, *Werke*, IX, 8.
[253] *Der Feldzug von 1813*, *Werke*, VII, 308.
[254] *Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1807/8*, Polit. Schriften, 66.
[255] *Op. cit.*
[256] *Vom Kriege*, II, 4 = 306 f.
[257] *Op. cit.*, II, 5 = 315.
[258] *Strategische Kritik des Feldzuges von 1814*, *Werke*, VII, 361.
[259] *Vom Kriege*, II, 2 = 283.
[260] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 221.

the "most individual traits of the moment",[261] the "multiplicity and the indeterminate boundary of all relationships"[262] require rather as cognitive prerequisite of action a "mere tact of judgment," which hits more or less well, depending on whether there is more or less genius in the commander,[263] and "which, proceeding from natural acumen and formed by reflection, hits the right thing almost unconsciously";[264] it consists in a "dark comparison of all magnitudes and relationships, whereby the remote and unimportant are set aside more quickly and the nearest and most important are found out more quickly than if this were to happen by way of strict logical sequence".[265] Through this "divining and feeling out of the truth,"[266] through this "feeling, which is however only a higher judgment",[267] through this "mental instinct",[268] the activity of the understanding leaves "the territory of strict science, of logic and mathematics, and becomes... art".[269] This intimate connection between structure of reality and character of the cognitive prerequisites of action was already thoroughly clear to the young Clausewitz. When he advocated the thesis that strategy does not deal merely "with magnitudes which are subject to a mathematical calculation," he recognized at the same time that it must enter the realm of art[270] and that strategic designs require "much tact of the mind";[271] correspondingly, he painted the picture of the good commander at that time.[272]

Only against the background of this open theory of action, which for its part is logically bound to an essentially relativistic historical mode of observation, can Clausewitz's remarks on the two problem circles be understood which form the two most important action-theoretically relevant areas within the general war theory: these are the doctrine of purpose and means and the doctrine of the double kind of war.[273] Since these doctrines are intertwined with the theoretical

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[261] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 962.
[262] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 = 251.
[263] Last posthumous note on the main work, *op. cit.*, 182.
[264] *Op. cit.*, III, 14 = 401.
[265] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 961; cf. I, 7 = 263 f.; III, 7 = 371 f.; VI, 8 = 663; VII, (On the culminating point of victory), 945.
[266] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 = 245; cf. I, 3 = 233; VII, 5 = 880.
[267] *Op. cit.*, I, 5 = 257.
[268] *Op. cit.*, II, 2 = 298.
[269] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 961.
[270] *Bemerkungen*, 19.
[271] *Strategie*, 60. Tact and exercise of judgment, it says a few years later, are "the soul of action" not only in war but also in "every art and performance of human life" (*Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 434).
[272] *Strategie*, 39 ff. On the figure of the genius general in the literature of the 18th century and on similar motifs in the thought of Berenhorst, who likewise emphasized the role of moral forces and chance, see Höhn, *Revolution*, esp. 515 ff., 182 ff., 205 ff., 235.
[273] And vice versa: confusion is certain if one, like Aron (*Penser la guerre*, I, 175), does not take note of the web of historical approach and action theory at all and thinks the solution of the theoretical question in

principle of the political nature of war and are always to be thought together, it appears expedient to discuss the problem of action and the tasks of the tact of judgment first in the broader framework of politics in general, in order then to consider the more special aspects of the same complex of thought more closely on the basis of the two mentioned doctrines. Now we know that in the principle of the primacy of politics not the authoritative mode of action of a civilian authority, but "political intercourse" in its totality, thus the "social union," is meant; the objective concept of politics has here the absolute precedence over the subjective and the transition from pure to real war turns out accordingly.[274] Obviously, no action-theoretical questions would arise if Clausewitz had limited himself to the use of the concept of politics in the objective sense. However, he also speaks of politics in the subjective sense of the purposeful actions of civilian will-bearers or authorities,[275] i.e., in the sense that is familiar to us today after the Aristotelian concept of politics, still alive around 1800, has meanwhile died out (what optical illusions this can cause in the reading of Clausewitz is obvious). The action-theoretical problem arises, however, precisely in the field of tension between objective and subjective politics. Its existence thus does not in itself mean a primacy and a sovereign autonomy of subjective politics, but only its positive or negative relationship to the objective givens of political intercourse. Our analysis will show that Clausewitz grants precedence to the latter and, while not denying subjective politics latitude, sets certain limits to it at the same time. One reason why he does not directly thematize the relationship between objective and subjective politics is precisely his conviction that only the former can be treated scientifically; if subjective politics deviates from the objective "as trustee of state interests against other states" and serves preferably the "ambition, the private interest, or the vanity of the rulers", it does not come into consideration for him as a theorist at all.[276] Not subjective, "moral" or "immoral" attitudes interest here, but the objective course of political intercourse. On the other hand, however, the complexity and heterogeneity of this intercourse, the possible, even if not arbitrary, combinability of its already existing components according to respectively different viewpoints and, moreover, the diversity of the psychic sources of human action remain conscious at all times; thus the indifference toward subjective attitudes or motives does not amount to an indifference toward subjective politics in the sense of the purpose-rational action of subjects who want to be active on the basis of the objective givens of a certain political intercourse and with the most exact possible consideration of the same. Only thereby, incidentally, do concepts

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Clausewitz would determine praxeology in terms of content. Schering, however, had emphasized for a long time that one should expect no "advice" or even "recipes" at all from Clausewitz (*Kriegsphilosophie*, 39).

[274] See above Section 2.

[275] The double meaning of the concept of politics in Clausewitz has been noticed for a long time, see e.g. Korfes, *Clausewitz' Werk*, LXXIII; Kessel, *Doppelpol. Strategie*, 627; Aron, *Penser la guerre*, I, 92 note 2, 140, 410.

[276] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 993.

like will, setting of purpose, or choice of means, which stand in the center of subjective politics, gain their concrete historical reference and content.

The precedence of objective politics in Clausewitz can be explained plausibly already from the developmental history of his thought. As we know, he arrived at the formula of war as a continuation of political intercourse not least on the basis of general historical reflections on the character of war, which were framed by equally general anthropological and cultural-philosophical views, and not, for instance, on the basis of investigations into actions and reactions, decisions and omissions, successes and mistakes of leaders or commanders who engaged in politics in the subjective sense. The insight into the political nature of war could serve for the unification of the theory precisely because here objective politics, i.e., political intercourse, was meant, which, in contrast to the confusing and unpredictable, irreducible and unclassifiable ideas and modes of action of subjective politics, does not essentially elude scientific grasping. Not by chance is the precedence of objective politics emphasized precisely in Book VIII of the main work and shortly before the setting up of the formula. The "character" of a war and its "great outlines," we read here, is to be determined by theory on the basis of the "political magnitudes and relationships";[277] goal and means of the war entrepreneur orient themselves, to be sure, according to the "quite individual traits" of his situation, but carry in themselves the "character of the time and of the general relationships";[278] logically, the long historical excursus on the dependence of the nature of war on the "social condition" of the various peoples also found its place precisely in this context.[279] Clausewitz had sharpened his gaze first for such dependencies on the great contemporary example, namely Napoleonic warfare as it proceeded from the revolutionary upheaval of socio-political conditions. Although he neither misjudged nor disparaged the driving force that emanated from Napoleon's personality, it nevertheless never occurred to him to ascribe the new warfare in its style and its dimensions to the personal peculiarity of the genial Corsican; decisive for him from the beginning remained the radically changed form of political intercourse after 1789, as he kept in mind that revolutionary warfare was indeed perfected by Napoleon, but not first called into life by him. Thus he points out—again in connection with the justification of the formula—that the Napoleonic art of war arose from the altered politics "which offered other means, other forces".[280] Of the new phenomena in the field of the art of war, it is said in another place, "the very least is to be ascribed to new inventions or new directions of ideas and the most to the new

[277] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3A = 959.
[278] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 974.
[279] *Op. cit.*, 962 ff.
[280] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 6B = 998.

social conditions and relationships".[281] The early observations on the socio-political character of Napoleonic warfare were generalized thus even before the programmatic setting up of the formula: "the general relationships out of which a war proceeds and which naturally constitute its foundation also determine its character".[282]

The conclusions that result from these theoretical insights regarding the relationship between objective and subjective politics were pronounced by Clausewitz with all clarity, and specifically in a late text which was written down when the final schema of the theory was already established. Here it says: "Whoever does not recognize the influence of the general and higher relationships on the action of the persons engaged in the development of special acts, holds it to be something accidental, He has absolutely not grasped the war in its most actual life and to Him we would absolutely not grant any judgment on the development of the forces acting in it".[283] The framework of the action thus stands firm independent of the will of the actors, and its constitution conditions the behavior of the actors on the stage. The existence of narrower or broader latitudes for subjective politics does not nullify the fundamental reality of this framework, but arises itself from its objective character, namely the essential multidimensionality and contradictoriness of political intercourse, which permits different objectives and movements. Precisely because framework or limit and latitude of action belong together, the elementary task of subjective politics in the case of a war consists in finding out, through the "grandest" and "most decisive act of judgment," "what the war *according to the nature of the relationships* cannot be".[284] The nature of the relationships, not subjective preferences of a self-interested (in the private sense) or moral kind, should thus provide the guideline of action. This side of pure war, i.e., within that war reality at one end of which stands the war of annihilation and at the other armed observation, it remains left to judgment "to establish the limits for the efforts"[285]—of course with regard not only to the set purposes, but equally to the available means, which are also to be reckoned among the objective givens of political intercourse[286] and already mark out the latitude of action at first glance. Another limit of subjective politics, which consists precisely in the subjective politics of the enemy, namely his

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[281] *Op. cit.*, VI, 30 = 856; cf. IV, 12 = 479 ("...the greater energy which warfare had acquired through the greater circumstances from which it had sprung...") as well as the characterization of Scharnhorst, Polit. Schriften, 129.

[282] *Vom Kriege*, VI, 8 = 659.

[283] *Die Feldzüge von 1799*, § 97 *Werke*, VI, 336.

[284] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 27 = 212.

[285] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 10 = 199.

[286] A good idea of what Clausewitz understands by determining the character of a war through social conditions is incidentally provided by the chapter on the maintenance of the army, *op. cit.*, V, 14 = 573 ff.

real or presumed intentions and actions, so that each side "gives the law" to the other,[287] we will get to know more closely in the discussion of the double kind of war.

Clausewitz himself illustrated with an important example from history[288] how the precedence of objective politics is to be understood and the latitude of subjective politics is to be estimated. The theoretical guideline in the depiction of the campaigns of Frederick the Great is formed by the proof that the King's mode of action held fast with inner necessity to the understanding of his time of the essence and tasks of warfare even then when the givens of the concrete situation (existing interest in the greatest possible success, available mass army etc.) permitted a substantially different warfare. Precisely for this reason, remarks Clausewitz, the circumstances in war would have to be considered not merely under the viewpoint of the individual case, "which always and even now modify the general principles, but simultaneously under the viewpoint of the *time and manner of war then*," according to which it was "something quite unknown, or rather something non-existent," that 50-60,000 men "merely for the sake of their number had to have the inner determination to attack, to beat and if possible to shatter 30,000..."[289]. The Seven Years' War was on the part of the attacker for the first and last time on the same height with the newer wars" when the retreat of the Austrian army to Prague offered Frederick the possibility of a total success, i.e., to beat this army with gathered power and then to march to Vienna and dictate his conditions to the Austrian government. Nevertheless, the overthrow of Austria remained "with the earlier war establishment an impracticable thing," and thereby factors of objective and subjective politics mixed with one another. To be able to understand Frederick's behavior, one must first "throw the following considerations, *taken from the circumstances of the time*, into the scale", and by this are meant the general conditions of warfare at that time, thus the supply difficulties and the immense costs for every armed man, so that heavy losses could hardly be absorbed. Only against this objective background is Frederick's subjective decision explained to pursue that "moderate" line which finally yielded him the firm possession of Silesia, since weak Austria "had to purchase" the possession of all other provinces with the renunciation of this province.[290] The general character of warfare and the condition of the enemy thus decisively shaped Frederick's subjective politics—it would have remained ineffective, however, if it for its part had not been capable of doing, through correct assessment of the situation in detail, that which was possible to do at all according to contemporary understanding.

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[287] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 3 = 194.

[288] In his war-historical works, moreover, he generally endeavored to conceive of events as "application of theory" and "to clearly construct the plan of a campaign from our principles and thereby give it the necessity which every philosophical truth has", *Strategische Kritik des Feldzuges von 1814*, *Werke*, VII, 360 f.

[289] *Die Feldzüge Friedrichs*, § 42 *Werke*, X, 108.

[290] *Feldzugspläne Friedrichs des Großen...*, *Werke*, X, 41 ff.; *Die Feldzüge Friedrichs*, §§ 15-16 *Werke*, X, 57, 57, cf. § 20, p. 64 f. The emphasis is Clausewitz's.

In this broader area, the tact of judgment has thus to decide how subjective politics must direct itself according to the objective givens of political intercourse, whereby precedence of the latter and latitude of the former are thought together.[291] We turn now to the two doctrines associated with this, of purpose and means and of the double kind of war, in order to find out what tasks the tact of judgment has to master here. And it must master tasks, for in these areas too there are no concrete norms of action for the individual case, but the theory offers only systems of variables which indicate which criteria are to be used in the analysis of the respective case from the viewpoint of a specific objective. The theory possesses, in other words, no means to replace the tact of judgment with general prescriptive statements, but on the other hand it does not want to content itself with pointing to the immeasurable diversity of possible purposes and means—to which, incidentally, as we shall see immediately, the historically relativistic mode of observation and the assumed precedence of objective politics would entitle it. It prepares rather to draw up an inventory of the observable or conceivable constellations and thereby to penetrate as deeply as possible into the labyrinth of practice, without however crossing its own boundaries and giving up the descriptive basic attitude. It must of course be added immediately that this part of the theory, despite all clarity of the outlines, is the least worked out. For Clausewitz championed in his early period for polemical reasons a somewhat linear-simplistic view of the relationship between purpose and means, which he was able to replace only partially and rudimentarily with a more flexible and varied one after the maturation of his historical mode of observation and the formation of the final schema of the theory.

The necessity of a strict symmetry between the magnitude of the purpose and the magnitude of the means was first asserted against Bülow's view that great effects are best produced by small means; the art of war, opined Clausewitz at that time, does not make progress when one achieves greater results with fewer forces, but when it subjects the effects of the forces to the rational calculation establishing the correct use of the available means for the set purpose and thus makes them independent of chance as far as possible.[292] The same Clausewitz who pointed to the effect of chance and the fluctuating moral magnitudes against the rigid abstractness of geometric war theory, wanted on the other hand—not quite consistently—to remove the ground from chance through exact calculation and correlation of purpose and means. Under the decisive impression of the Napoleonic wars, Clausewitz kept in view at that time, of course, only a single possibility of the correlation of purpose and means and considered it self-evident that the great purposes of Napoleon could only be realized by the great means deployed; the

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[291] In light of this analysis, Aron's assumption that according to Clausewitz the greatness of the statesman or the general shows itself in *soumettre le destin à un vouloir intelligent* (*Penser la guerre*, I, 427 f.) must appear as a phrase plucked from thin air. Cf. on the other hand Hepp's good remarks on the meaning and primacy of objective politics in Clausewitz (*Der harmlose Cl.*, 415).

[292] *Bemerkungen*, 13, 12; *Strategie*, 63.

emphasis on the necessity of great means connected itself, moreover, in his thought with the central role of engagement and battle contrary to the preference of the above-mentioned war theorists for maneuver. In view of this its binding to quite specific war-historical phenomena, the early thesis of the necessary correlation of purpose and means also did not develop into a comprehensive theory that would be able to take into account all conceivable variations. On the contrary, the never-slackening effect of the other aspect of Clausewitz's early thought, which revolved around the concept of moral magnitudes, forced explicit restrictions in every attempt at definition of the art of war as mere "rational connection of purpose and means": it was added namely that the best use of the available means for the attainment of the purpose is no object of a "merely mathematical calculation", and thereby thought was given not only to the role of "tact,"[293] but obviously also to factors that would be able to simply nullify a rational correlation of purpose and means, such as e.g. that "passionate courage," which is nothing but "the instinct of a vigorous nature" and in which sometimes "the highest wisdom" lies.[294] Significantly, this aspect of Clausewitz's early thought is reactivated in a late phase, when our theorist had already come to an expansion or relativization of his original narrow view of the relationship between purpose and means for other reasons. The following passage is instructive: "Since war is no pure product of necessary relationships of purpose and means, but always retains something of the nature of play, warfare also cannot do without that element [sc. of daring linked to the favorable opportunity]".[295] Repeated is also the old remark, according to which under circumstances "the highest boldness can become the highest wisdom".[296]

The narrower view of the relationships between purpose and means, i.e., not yet directly influenced by historical and sociological considerations, which prevailed in Clausewitz's thought as long as his still elementary war theory was conceived from the view of the Napoleonic-inspired commander, had to recede to the extent that the political character of war was recognized in its widely branched implications and simultaneously the historical relativity of purposes and means, whereby, as we know, the theory of action and with it also the problem of the choice of purpose and means was placed on a different foundation. After the establishment of the essential affinity between absolute or Napoleonic war and the other real wars, and also after the establishment of the concept of pure war, the question of purpose and means could only pose itself against the background of the complexity of the "social union" or of "political intercourse" and thereby it wound itself into the tangle of countless effects and

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[293] *Ueber die künftigen Kriegs-Operationen Preußens..., Schriften*, 80.
[294] Letter to his fiancée of 20.9.1806, Polit. Schriften, 8.
[295] *Die Feldzüge von 1799*, § 66 *Werke*, VI, 77 f.
[296] *Op. cit.*, § 82 = VI, 232; cf. § 5 = V, 49 ("...where the difficulty of the circumstances or the inclination of the general gives boldness a preponderance..."). Elsewhere, however, it is made clear that "only that extraordinary and magnificent thing leads to the purpose which fits the whole" (§ 84 = VI, 252).

interactions. Wars that take place under the conditions of culture are characterized by the fact that in them "the number of possible relationships and consequently of combinations is very much increased, the multiplicity of arrangements enlarged and through the subordinating gradation of purposes the first means must be removed further from the last purpose".[297] It is therefore not surprising if Clausewitz, while coming to the formula on the path of historical reflections, simultaneously adopts a pronouncedly historically relativistic attitude toward the question of purpose and means. The judgment on a war, its goal and its means can only arise from the total overview of all relationships under consideration of the "most individual traits of the moment" and never be "purely objective," since it is determined according to the intellectual and emotional properties "of princes, statesmen, commanders".[298] The goal of a war is "just as changeable..., as the political purpose and the peculiar relationships of the war are"[299]—but even between political purpose and warlike goal there is no unambiguous, stable relationship, as the discussion of the double kind of war will show us.

Before we get to know the ideally typic possible combinations of purposes and means more closely on the basis of this discussion, we must recall as an introduction the thoughts Clausewitz had about the interaction of purpose and means. In doing so, he started with the elementary observation that the purposes in tactics are the means in strategy or strategy would make use of tactics for the attainment of its purposes,[300] and gradually worked out a more extensive, multi-level schema, at the head of which stood the political purpose. Now he knew, however, that with the "great multiplicity of relationships" in the state of civilization even the political purpose cannot always be a quite simple one and that, even if it were, yet the binding of action to a multitude of conditions and considerations permits no realization of the same through a single great act, but requires several acts, each of which fulfills a special purpose and precisely thereby is bound to the whole.[301] Thus arises a whole hierarchy of purposes, whereby the respectively subordinate serves as means of the superordinate; being-purpose and being-means constitute consequently no fixed attributes, but rather changeable and exchangeable functions—apart from the last political purpose, which can never become means. Most interesting for us is this transformation of purpose into means and vice versa when it concerns the indispensable means in war, namely combat or the engagement for the purpose of the annihilation of the enemy; we must, moreover, never lose sight of the fact that the problem of purpose and means is treated not *in abstracto*, but with regard to war, that the speech is always *of* war and that the political purpose too is investigated only in its relationship to war

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[297] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 224.
[298] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 962, cf. 974.
[299] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 214.
[300] See e.g. *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 236.
[301] *Vom Kriege*, IV, 3 = 422 f.

and to the war situation. Clausewitz regards the view that the annihilation of the enemy armed forces forms only a means, but the actual purpose is always some other, as formally true, but factually misleading, and he wants to supplement it by the reminder that "precisely this annihilation of the enemy armed force is found again in that purpose too, and that this is only a weak modification of the same".[302] A purpose, therefore, which makes use of the engagement as means for the annihilation of the enemy, must let itself be stamped more or less by the means used, it cannot exist in the autarky of its self-understanding, it is with its means no longer the same as it possibly would be without it. In a text from the late period Clausewitz expressed this thought unmistakably: "but nowhere do purpose and means stand in constant interaction so much as in warfare; with however much right the political intentions give the things the first direction, the means, namely the combat, can never be viewed as a dead instrument; out of itself, out of its rich life process shoot forth a thousand motives which can become more important and imperative than all original political ones were".[303] What extraordinary implications this insight has for the entire concept of the possible relationships of purpose and means and for the whole theory of action, we will see immediately.

The problem of the double kind of war is closely connected with the investigation of the possible relationships of purpose and means in the sense that war theory must answer the question whether the kind of war can be stated or foreseen on the basis of the purposes floating before the mind or the means used thereby. Must more means be used in a war that is waged for the purpose of the overthrow of the enemy than in a war with modest intention? Does the original intention remain decisive for the extent of the means required in the war? Stated differently: does the limited purpose call forth the limited war and the purpose of overthrow the war of overthrow necessarily or must the accumulation and use of large means of war in themselves lead to the war of annihilation—and vice versa? Is the correlation of purpose and means proportional and linear or not? And if not (or not always), what determines then the kind of war if not the calculating act of correlation on the part of the authority prevailing in political intercourse? The mere enumeration of the four possible relationships of purpose and means says, however, that only in the first two is a proportional correlation present, namely when a large purpose goes hand in hand with the deployment of large means and a small purpose with the deployment of limited means. The first case stood in the center of Clausewitz's attention since early times, and forever, because of its imposing exemplification in Napoleonic warfare. "Goal and means stand in a connection of inner necessity," if greatest efforts promise great results, the principle reads here.[304] Clausewitz shows himself particularly interested in the establishment of a rational analogy between purpose and means—and this is probably an

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[302] *Op. cit.*, 423 f.
[303] *Die Feldzüge von 1799*, § 102 *Werke*, VI, 382.
[304] *Die Feldzüge Friedrichs*, § 15 *Werke*, X, 54.

inclination that was never quite overcome by the historically relativistic mode of observation, especially as it benefited the classification or conceptual mastery of phenomena within the theory. Significant is Clausewitz's reaction to the fact registered by himself that the emotional forces of the combatants would sometimes go beyond the original political objective, so that they obviously cause a larger deployment of war means than the initially planned one and thus an increase in the intensity of the war. This contradiction, however, cannot according to Clausewitz arise at all in most cases or at any rate not last long, "because by the existence of such strong strivings a grand plan harmonizing with them will also be conditioned".[305] In this way the equilibrium of purpose and means will restore itself, although here the existence of a certain political potential, i.e., of the means, calls the great purpose into life rather than vice versa. The nuance is significant and meaningful, but what counts first is that in the critical hour, the hour of warfare, purpose and means balance each other.

In the second case of the proportional correlation of purpose and means, "our efforts," i.e., the deployed means, are "the smaller, the smaller our political purpose is".[306] This seems to be a mere consequence or inversion of the first case and requires no special discussion. We can therefore proceed immediately to the two cases of the disproportional correlation of purpose and means, prefacing the remark that this disproportionality became a problem for Clausewitz to the extent that the insight into the dependence of the nature of war on the whole complexity of "political intercourse" placed before his eyes the manifold combination possibilities of purpose and means on different levels, despite all adherence to the analogical guiding conception. Precisely when he reached out for the final synthesis, he therefore asked himself the questions whether the goal of warlike enterprises distinguishes itself from the political purpose of the same and what is the measure of the forces that must be deployed in war.[307] In these questions sticks, of course, the presumption that (political) purpose and warlike means could diverge more or less, and then there are two possible cases: either large means are used for the attainment of a limited purpose or a large purpose is striven for by limited means. The first of these two cases is brought up in the main work, where again rather unsystematically and casually two possibilities are envisaged: either a warlike goal is consciously set which must be much larger than the political purpose if the latter is to be achieved at all (as an example we could adduce the military overthrow of the enemy which is not accompanied by his political overthrow), or else "a very small political motive can produce an effect going far beyond its nature," thus mobilize means that stand in no relation graspable by calculation in advance to it.[308] Significantly, Clausewitz hardly bothers with the other conceivable case of the

[305] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 25 = 211.
[306] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 11 = 200.
[307] See the fragment "New Standpoint of the Theory of War", *Geist und Tat*, 309.
[308] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 11 = 201.

disproportional correlation of purpose and means, in which limited means would be used for the attainment of large purposes. We remember that he criticized Bülow precisely for the belief in such a possibility, and it seems as if he never seriously considered the same under the lasting impression of that early polemic. It must also have appeared to him as contradictory in itself, for—an approximate equality of forces of the two sides presupposed—the defender would not agree to lose everything without having previously deployed everything, which would have to force the attacker to a comparable effort. Were the forces of the attacker again highly superior, he would indeed be able to book a total success for himself, but whether such a success could be designated as the attainment of a "large purpose" would remain questionable: the magnitude of the purpose must indeed be measured against the magnitude of the possibilities of the one setting the purpose.

By breaking the framework of the proportional correlation of purpose and means through newer and better insights and granting precedence to the means at least in one case (use of large means for limited purposes), Clausewitz is no longer capable of conceptually mastering the double kind of war on the basis of the mere criterion of political purposes. Still in the Note of 1827 he speaks of the double kind exclusively in connection with the "purpose" (overthrow of the opponent or some conquests on the borders of his empire),[309] but in the finished chapter of the main work he not only went briefly into the just-mentioned case, but he also considered it advisable, despite all emphasis on the political character of war, to state emphatically that the political purpose must accommodate itself to the nature of the means and exercises an influence "only insofar as the nature of the forces exploding in it allows".[310] The inner dynamics of the means thus stands in the way of a consistent execution of the proportional correlating of purpose and means with precedence of the purpose and forces a consideration of the kind of war (also) from the standpoint of the means. Clausewitz, who had started from the criterion of purpose, opens himself gradually to this latter mode of viewing, yet he finally stops at hints and does not proceed to a systematic presentation of all conceivable aspects of the problem. He had asserted from the beginning the central importance of the means in war, but he grasps its inner dynamics only when the political nature of war became clear to him on a broad historical basis. This is only apparently or only from the view of the liberal interpretation of his thoughts paradoxical. For as long as Clausewitz oriented himself primarily on the Napoleonic phenomenon in establishing the unity of politics and war, he was dealing with a case in which means were indeed used in the most intensive way, but the conception of their inner dynamics could nevertheless not arise because here the means were bound to large purposes and appeared as it were as a function of the same. The detachment from Napoleonic normativism and the enforcement of the historical mode of viewing placed the primacy of politics on a broad

[309] *Vom Kriege*, 179.
[310] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 23 = 210.

historical basis and thus sharpened the eye for other combination possibilities of purpose and means, while they simultaneously called into life the conception of the double kind of war in the attempt to now take into account the whole diversity of historical phenomena and to classify the same ideally typically (s. b.). This two-sided process had an ambiguous consequence: the conception of the double kind of war could indeed unify the various historical war phenomena under the aegis of the political criterion, but it had to relativize the proportional correlation of purpose and means at least insofar as many a historical case made the inner dynamics of the latter visible. This would have had to bring insurmountable theoretical difficulties for Clausewitz, as I think, if he had wanted to remain with the initial plan and treat the double kind exclusively from the standpoint of purpose. The logically required doubling of criteria and simultaneously the conceptual expansion of the means, i.e., its grasping in the sense of the total available war potential, would on the contrary have put an end to the temptation to overcome the theoretical iridescence of a subjectively conceived purpose-means schema by casuistry, and would have had to additionally confirm the precedence of objective politics, which incidentally, as we know, would correspond thoroughly to the content of the formula and the descriptive intention of the mature theory.

There are, after all, indications that Clausewitz, in the expanded perspective of the final concept of the theory and despite his partial adherence to the subjectively colored concept of purpose, occasionally came to conceive the means in the sense of the total available war potential, i.e., of the total national strength including the moral magnitudes, and to ascribe to this means so understood inner dynamics, thus the ability to favor or even dictate the first or the second kind of war; subjective politics and the subjective purposes of the rulers would obviously have to bow to this inner dynamics of the means at least in the long run. At the time of the systematic working out of the formula, Clausewitz had written that "the war and the shape which one gives it proceeds from ideas, feelings and relationships prevailing at the moment",[311] and continued this relativization of the importance of subjective objective-settings for the choice of the kind of war in the finished section of the main work, in which he stated that the effect of the political purpose depends on the constitution of political intercourse, which is why "one and the same political purpose... can produce quite different effects with different peoples, or even with one and the same people at different times." Sensing apparently the logical discrepancy between this statement and the subjectivistic interpretation of the concept of purpose, he opines at the same time that the political purpose forms indeed the original motive of the war and as such it must determine warlike goal and expenditure of means—but it forms this motive not in and for itself, but "only in relation to the mutual states".[312] Thereby the decisive significance of the constitution of the political collective as carrier of the total war potential was indirectly but

[311] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 2 = 954.
[312] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 11 = 200.

clearly recognized. This recognition entailed for the theorist some difficulty with the subjectivistic concept of purpose, on the other hand, however, it was in effortless agreement with earlier findings of the military historian, who knew at least two cases in which the subjective setting of purpose regarding the kind of war was grounded in the objective constitution of the political collective or intercourse. Thus Clausewitz had described how Frederick the Great stayed with limited war although "highest interest" was at stake, and for him it was also easy to see since time immemorial that "wars which are waged with the whole gravity of the mutual national strength must be organized according to other principles than those where Everything was calculated according to the relation of the standing armies to one another".[313] The (temporary) enforcement of the first kind of war was thus effected not by "false" or "evil" subjective purposes (there were, moreover, no proofs that the moral quality of men had suddenly deteriorated around 1800) and just as little did "healthy" or "humane" purposes stand godfather to limited warfare; if the war of annihilation did not make up the rule in history, this lay in objective reasons: "But these general relations have made most wars into a half-thing, where actual hostility had to wind its way through such a conflict of relationships that it remained only a very weak element".[314]

All this is not intended to mean that general relations and not men decide where, when and what kind of war is to be waged. But this decision forms itself a link in the chain of relations, and it rests on the tact of judgment, whose main task consists precisely in the appropriate

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[313] *Op. cit.*, III, 17 = 413.

[314] *Op. cit.*, VI, 8 = 659. According to Kessel (*Genesis*, 416 f.), Clausewitz distinguishes in the note of 1827 between the general influence of politics on war and the double type because he wants to highlight the subjective factor thereby; thus Clausewitz saw the difference of the two types of war precisely in "this formation of will..., which at all times and under all possible conditions always has the freedom to decide one way or the other". (In contrast to this, Kessel had earlier represented the correct view that the double type of war in its connection with objective politics or state constitution is to be distinguished from the "mere influence of the political goal on war", especially since the purpose of overthrowing also existed in the limited wars of the 18th century, *Doppelpol. Strat.*, 627, 629.) That may perhaps be true if one wants to describe a momentary impression or intention of Clausewitz. But if it is meant to imply that Clausewitz ever believed that Napoleon could have freely decided for limited warfare or Frederick for the war of annihilation, it stands in direct contradiction to the clear statements cited in this paragraph (esp. regarding Napoleon cf. *Der russische Feldzug*, *Werke*, VII, 239). Clausewitz would ultimately have to deprive the principle of war as a continuation of politics of any historical content and thus also of any theoretical relevance if he wanted to link the distinction between the two types of war in all consistency to free subjective goal-setting (this also against Aron, *Penser la guerre*, I, 103 f.). We said already that he finally noticed or at least sensed the logical discrepancy between the two viewpoints (i.e. perhaps after writing the note), which is why he also restricted the effect of the subjective factor and not vice versa. Kessel (*op. cit.*, 418) sees the mentioned discrepancy too, but he misses the relativization of subjective goal-settings in I, 1, although he otherwise himself states that in Clausewitz's late phase "the element of subjective will... is particularly restricted". In a somewhat later and brilliant treatise, he incidentally worked out the objective backgrounds of the two types of war very well (*Die doppelte Art*, esp. 300, 302 f.).

diagnosis of relations. Not only individual resolutions of commanders can "get their main directions... yet only from the general relations",[315] but also the political leadership decides on the kind of war to be waged according to the respective situation and not according to preconceived sympathies for the war of annihilation or the limited war. The "peculiarity of the case," recognized by the tact of judgment, commands which means—from the annihilation of the enemy armed force to the passive waiting for his blows—is to be preferred.[316] The "nature of all relationships" can very well "condition" a war of the first kind, states Clausewitz in the completed section of the main work,[317] and thereby he by no means has the feeling that this would be a morally suspect step or even a return to barbarism compared to limited war: "is then the guidance of great forces, the steering in storm and wave-beating not in itself a higher activity of the spirit?"[318] He thought no differently in earlier years, when he e.g. rejected Austria's soft attitude toward France with the following arguments: "for where had France given similar examples of moderation, and how is moderation possible at all for a state that strives with immense means for immense purposes; with whom every breath is a violence; there moderation would be just as unreasonable as elsewhere slackness".[319] Convinced all his life that war is anyway nothing humane,[320] he viewed with equal lack of illusion the possibility of the war of annihilation and the motives of "moderation." In one of his last writings he traced the "unprecedented moderation" of the Allies toward France after 1814 back to the following power-political considerations: "they did not believe themselves strong enough to reduce France itself... They would indisputably have been able to for the moment, but the powers shied away from inoculating the France so strong according to all its relationships with a violent principle of reaction".[321] Also on the theoretical level he expressly connected the "attenuating principle" or the inclination toward limited warfare with the weakness of the motives of action and explained[322] the "motive for peace" by "two things that can step into the place of the inability for further resistance," i.e., the "improbability" and the "too high price of success".[323] That he attributed to politics in the sense of a "devious," "dishonest cleverness" an innate inclination toward limited war, we already know.[324]

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[315] *Feldzug von 1796*, § 58 *Werke*, IV, 226.
[316] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 221.
[317] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 26 = 212.
[318] *Op. cit.*, III, 16 = 410.
[319] *Bekenntnisschrift*, *Schriften*, 695. Cf. his remarks on the possibility of a cruel war in Germany on p. 733. The prevailing viewpoint is: "to whose disadvantage?".
[320] *Vom Kriege*, V, 14 = 586.
[321] *Die Verhältnisse Europas...*, Polit. Schriften, 228.
[322] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6A = 989.
[323] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 216.
[324] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 26 = 212. See above Section 3, esp. p. 39.

These statements on the two kinds of war or on the question of the intensification and moderation of war, which mostly stem from the late period, prove that the prioritizing of the problem of the double kind in connection with the formation of the final schema of the theory by no means results from a growing concern of Clausewitz to contain the war of annihilation, to renounce bellicism and to leave precedence to the civil-humane viewpoint. Such concerns never appeared in the horizon of our theorist—not because he had committed himself once and for all to the one member of the vulgar alternative militaristic bellicism vs. humane civilianism, but simply because he did not know this alternative or rather did not take it seriously. He thought descriptively, and the expansion of the perspective through the theoretical upgrading of limited war served exclusively descriptive purposes; not a normative gap, but a gap in historical observation was to be closed. The discovery of the distance between pure and war of annihilation extended the concept of friction over all kinds of war, unified the war phenomenon in all its historical shapes and placed war of annihilation and limited war as equal kinds of real war side by side—m. a. w.: if the identification of war concept and war of annihilation no longer existed, there was no reason not to treat limited war as war in the full sense. This theoretical legitimation of limited war naturally places the question of the double kind on the agenda; for if wars of every magnitude are wars, then it is a matter of typifying the now confusing diversity, explaining the typical shapes of war resulting therefrom in detail and in connection with that discussing the combination possibilities of purpose and means.

Precisely the ideal-typical treatment of the double kind indicates that no preference for one of the two kinds of war over the other is intended thereby; the purpose-rational choice remains left to the tact of judgment—and indeed of the judgment of the actor. For reality knows no ideal types, and therefore the ideal-typical grasping of reality can yield no practically relevant normative orientation; norms derived from ideal types are practically irrelevant in a concrete situation. But the ideal-typical procedure offers theoretical advantages, and Clausewitz is aware of this. Since theory "can never... absorb the actual individual case in itself," it must "stick to classes of phenomena";[325] "clarity, determinateness and force our conceptions gain by making only the perfect," "extreme opposites the object of our observation"—without, however, forgetting thereby that we are dealing here with auxiliary constructions and that the concrete case of war "mostly lies in the middle and is dominated by this extreme only in the measure as it approaches it".[326] The talk of the double kind of war thus means merely the summary of the historically attested war phenomena into two ideal types, and indeed in knowledge of the fact that there have been and will be several cases in which moments of the war of annihilation and of the limited war can mix with one another to the point of unrecognizability. In fact, it seems to have been the case that in Clausewitz's world of ideas, in accordance with the historical

[325] *Op. cit.*, II, 2 = 288.
[326] *Op. cit.*, VI, 30 = 859.

principle, the concrete diversity finally gained the upper hand over its ideal-typical formalization. The term "double kind" appears a single time in the Note of 1827, and we miss it precisely in the completed chapter of the main work, in which "the one kind" and "the other kind" are indeed spoken of once,[327] but otherwise expressions are used that either refer simply to historical multiplicity, thus bringing the extreme phenomena and the intermediate stages equally before the eyes,[328] or indicate instead of two exactly defined kinds of war rather two loose directions of action.[329] Still more striking is the absence of the term "double kind" in the (most likely reworked) chapter on purpose and means in war, in which Clausewitz neither uses the purpose as a yardstick to undertake a simple dichotomy of wars (on the contrary, he recalls the reasons already known to us, mentioned in the first chapter of the first book, why the purpose developed from the concept of war does not fit universally to real war),[330] nor classifies the means ideally typically, but speaks of them only in connection with the "peculiarity of the case" and designs a descending gradation of means without even attempting a division of the same into two groups—he even says that it would be a pedantry to want to bring them into classes.[331] This all must be regarded as confirmation of our conjecture expressed above, that both the one-sidedness of the criterion of subjective objective-setting and the insight into the inner dynamics and the extensive character of the means would stand in the way of the consistent theoretical execution of the idea of the "double kind." The increasing complexity of the theory did not permit a straight application of criteria that appeared immediately plausible on a more primitive theoretical stage.[332]

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[327] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 26 = 211.

[328] Such as e.g. "wars with all degrees of importance and energy, from the war of annihilation down to mere armed observation" (I, 1, § 11 = 201); "...how different the wars must be according to the nature of their motives and the conditions from which they have sprung" (I, 1, § 27 = 212); "...war is... a true chameleon" (I, 1, § 28 = 212). Cf. Hintze, *Delbrück...*, 150 ff., esp. 153.

[329] "The more magnificent and stronger the motives of war... but the weaker the motives and tensions are..." (I, 1, § 25 = 211).

[330] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 216.

[331] *Op. cit.*, 221 f.

[332] The idea of the double type is found already in Clausewitz's earliest writings (which in itself proves that it was by no means the result of a late aversion to the war of annihilation) and connects here clearly with the concept of subjective purpose. In a note from the year 1803 (*Polit. Schriften*, 3) we read: "There are two types of coalitions in politics, the ones aim honestly at the ruin or the conquering of the enemy, the others have the intention to weaken, to occupy the state against which one coalesces, and the state with which one coalesces... etc." And in *Strategie* of 1804 it says - this time with explicit reference to the political purpose of the war - this could be "of a double type: either to destroy the opponent completely, to abolish his state existence, or to prescribe conditions to him at the peace", in both cases however the destruction of the enemy armed forces must be the "closer purpose of the war", i.e. means to achieve the political purpose (51). Here the purpose is a double one, but the means, as it appears in the perspective of Napoleonic normativism, is only a single one. Multiple combination possibilities of purpose and means are therefore out of the question, and the absence of contradictions is bought at the price of not being able

The dissolution of the two ideal types that make up the double kind into a diversity of peculiar cases brings us, when it concerns practice, back to orientation by the tact of judgment. In theory, both the two ideal types and the countless individual cases grasped in them are subsumed under the One, namely the pure concept of war. We have explained what that means and how Clausewitz arrived at this view.[333] Clausewitz says unmistakably that, regardless of whether the real war deviates more or less from the concept of war, it always stands under that strict concept as under a highest law.[334] The problem of purpose and means is thus illuminated from another view. The law of decision by arms applies equally to the two kinds of war and to all their conceivable variations, it applies even where the engagement does not factually occur.[335] Decision by arms or combat is the only means in war, but this means is characterized by flexibility, adaptability and multiformity, in short by the "multiplicity of its application".[336] And since the means appears in all kinds of war, it can also unfold in all, i.e., assume different forms regardless of the kind of war and only as a consequence of the fact that war is taking place. The basic forms of combat, namely attack and defense, can therefore be found again in every kind of war, although various strategic and tactical variations are conceivable thereby. If therefore Clausewitz speaks of the double kind of war, he does not mean by it two kinds of strategy and still less two forms of tactics. Tactical attack and tactical defense take place within the framework of strategic attack just as much as of strategic defense. Strategic attack with limited

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to grasp the historical diversity conceptually. In the late phase of Clausewitz's thinking, this constellation of thought entities changes drastically, indeed it is partially reversed.

[333] See above Section 4.

[334] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 230. It is incomprehensible to me how Kessel can claim in the face of such clear statements that there is a type of war which does not belong to the absolute concept of the same even as a modification (*Genesis*, 414; pure and absolute concept of war are used synonymously here, as with all commentators). The implicit goal of this assertion is to move the war of annihilation into the vicinity of the pure concept of war and thereby push it as well as the latter into the sphere of fiction; Kessel believes he can and must defend Clausewitz against accusations like Liddell Hart's in this way. But it is false that Clausewitz came to the view attributed to him by Kessel during work on Book VIII; to the extent that the earlier Napoleonic normativism still remains alive in this text, the type of overthrow is characterized as "basic idea" and the other as "modification" of the same (VIII, 3A = 957 f.; cf. VIII, 4 = 975). The groundbreaking aspect in Book VIII is the finding that even the Napoleonic war, which was called absolute until then, cannot be a pure war, and this is something quite different from Kessel's separation between war that is a modification and war that is no modification of absolute war. For the thesis that pure war is in *every* war and therefore the Napoleonic war is also no pure war, and the thesis that pure war is not present at all in the second type and therefore this differs from the Napoleonic war or war of annihilation, mean two completely different things. Clausewitz never claimed, as Kessel (*op. cit.*, 415) thinks, that the extreme must not be striven for, but simply that the extreme in the sense of pure war cannot be achieved anyway, but in the sense of the war of annihilation it can and may be striven for "where the nature of all conditions determines a war of the first type" (*Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 26 = 212).

[335] *Op. cit.*, I, 2 = 225.

[336] *Op. cit.*

political purpose is also quite conceivable,[337] which in turn forms a logical consequence of the fact that also in the negative striving the annihilation of the enemy armed forces can be set as a goal.[338] Conversely, however, no purpose of overthrow is conceivable with permanent strategic defensive. We mentioned that Clausewitz hardly gave thought to the possibility of the attainment of a large political purpose by the deployment of limited means, and we cannot know whether he would consider a strategy of attrition synonymous with the use of limited means and therefore unsuitable to tackle high-set tasks and bring them to a successful end.[339] From the view of his time he could at any rate not imagine that a strategy of attrition could under circumstances resort to the means of total warfare [328], although within the framework of his conviction of the possibility of the use of all forms of strategy in all kinds of wars (the only exception to this was just mentioned) the strategy of attrition could find its place as part of a striving oriented toward overthrow.

For some time it has been proven that strategy of overthrow and strategy of attrition do not coincide with the double kind of war, since they are precisely two different strategies and not two different kinds of war.[340] But if a kind of war cannot be fully explained (only) on the basis of the respectively followed strategy or the means used, it can just as little be explained exclusively with regard to its goals, as has been thought.[341] We mentioned the reasons why any one-sided theoretical orientation on the concept of purpose or that of means must remain insufficient for the determination of the nature of war in general—which incidentally Clausewitz himself, partly reluctantly, but following the inner logic of his historical approach nevertheless, finally recognized or at least suspected. We have now saved for the conclusion of our remarks on this subject the reference to a fundamental factor, the effect of which in itself demonstrates the precarious character of any rigid statement on the question of purpose and means and simultaneously places the whole action-theoretical problem in a glaring light. Calculations and programmatic determinations about purpose and means, however clear and binding they may look on paper, must fade when action is taken. Purpose and means shape themselves then in the struggle of the actors against one another, in which self-assertion and power increase,

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[337] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 5 = 984 ff. Clausewitz wrote in 1812: "The political defense, which consists in a nation fighting for its preservation and not for conquest (regardless in what form incidentally), does not concern actual war, although it has a significant influence on the spirit of the army and can become important in that respect" (*Bekenntnisschrift*, *Schriften*, 742).

[338] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 228.

[339] Delbrück opined after all that great goals could optionally also be achieved by mere maneuvers (*Strategie*, 17).

[340] See what Rothfels, *C. v. Clausewitz*, 161, and Schering, *Kriegsphilosophie*, 67 ff., object against Delbrück's view. Cf. Hintze, *Delbrück...*, 136 f., 154 f., as well as Kessel, Doppelpol. Strat., 628 f.

[341] So above all Delbrück's opponents, see e.g. Hobohm, *Delbrück etc.*, esp. 214, 225 f., as well as Szczepanski, *Delbrück und Cl.*, esp. 15, 16 f., 19. Cf. Creuzinger's good remarks on the disproportionality between purpose and type of warfare, *Hegels Einfluß*, esp. 76, 96, 78 f.

self-assertion through power increase is supreme law. The respective image of the enemy, of his essence, his intentions and his individual actions, determines the reactions and actions of the other side, indeed it stamps its most own essence itself. Thus "each gives the law to the other"[342] and the subjective logic of the established plans retreats before the objective logic of the struggle, which can culminate in the extreme. With regard to this one fights, and also with regard to this one prepares oneself for the fight. To be sure, in this preparation the counterweight of one's own internal conditions places obstacles in the way of a straight intensification, and therefore a "middle path" must be found here,[343] nevertheless the pressure under which one stands to undertake the greatest possible effort is enormous, and indeed out of the fear that the enemy could be the first to take this path. Even if someone has limited political purposes and is also willing and believes himself capable of using only limited means to achieve them, this does not yet mean that he can and may dispose only of these means. In principle, everyone must possess and be able to use everything that the enemy also has, and if possible also everything that the most advanced forms of technology and organization respectively offer—again already out of the fear that all this could get into the hands of the enemy beforehand. Subjective politics thus gets into dependence on the objective, in that it is no longer capable of setting purposes at discretion, i.e., independently of the (presumed) purposes of the enemy, or of renouncing the use of the respectively most effective means; it can even come to the point that thinking and acting is done primarily or exclusively with regard to the constitution of the means.

What applies to the setting of purpose and the preparation, applies no less to the conduct of war itself. For someone who "does not use the greatest effort," the danger exists that the other "uses it later and then outbids him";[344] precisely for this reason the simultaneous exertion of all forces is deeply founded in the nature of strategy.[345] Only rarely can one get by with maneuvers if the enemy wants and seeks the decisive battle; strategic maneuver presupposes balance of forces and relationships, and the great decision does not come about then simply because neither of the two sides seeks it.[346] If, on the other hand, one side is willing and anxious to reach for the extreme, it gives the law to the other as well, i.e., it determines negatively its purpose and means. Whoever is determined to go the way of great decision by arms, "he will also very likely be successful" if the other does not want to follow him in it. No one is to be blamed if he can achieve his (limited) purposes through the expenditure of small means and under avoidance of the great decision—"but we must always demand of him... that he keep the opponent always in

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[342] *Vom Kriege*, I, 1, § 3 = 194.
[343] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 3B = 960 f.
[344] *Feldzugspläne Friedrichs...*, *Werke*, X, 43.
[345] *Feldzug von 1796*, § 68 *Werke*, IV, 311.
[346] *Op. cit.*, § 52 = IV, 183.

view, so that he does not, if the latter reaches for the sharp sword, step against him with a dress sword".[347] That is it: keep the enemy always in view, thus finally let one's own behavior be prescribed by him. That is not lack of originality, but only vital vigilance. For everyone is what his enemy forces him to be—provided he is himself capable of breaking out of the social or historical nothingness and appearing as an enemy of someone. The last wisdom of the theory of action says that there can be no other theory of action, no other doctrine of purpose and means than that which the respective enemy dictates respectively.

[347] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 227, 229 f.

6. Method and Philosophy

The methodological procedure and the methodological insights of Clausewitz possess a lasting value just as great as his substantive positions. In their simplicity, their *common sense*, and their flexibility, his method yields nothing to the best analogous concepts of our century; and beyond this it has the double advantage of neither losing itself in supposedly profound sophistries nor unfolding anywhere other than in the closest connection with a concrete and at the same time extensive subject-matter. In both respects, therefore, the empty spinning of many modern methodological attempts and debates is avoided—and this not only because of the extraordinary intellectual gifts and sense of reality of our theorist, but also as a consequence of the concrete situation in the history of thought, which did not suffer from methodological hypertrophy and did not yet know that curious species who, in all seriousness, occupy themselves only with methods and with nothing else. That Clausewitz stood as a stranger toward professional philosophy, moreover—with his intellectual abilities—did his thought only good; his intellectual achievement itself offers a vivid proof for the old suspicion that philosophical training in the narrower sense is no *conditio sine qua non* for demanding thinking.

As with all methodological conceptions, so at the beginning of Clausewitz's methodological reflections there stands a substantive fundamental decision—that is, a statement about the nature of the subject to which the method is to be applied. When the young Clausewitz fought against geometrical war-theory, he reproached it not least for its attempt to force a shimmering, shifting, multiform subject-matter into a strict system, to *impose* universal, unchanging laws onto a material that by its very constitution had to resist them. Against this he asserted the "peculiarity" and "most individual features" of each case, as well as the plasticity and fluctuations of the moral magnitudes—so as, in a later phase, to let these objections and remarks flow into a large-scale historical mode of consideration and action-theory. Theory must therefore end up with triviality if it aims to grasp what is not theoretically graspable in the abstract form of a universal: "In war so many petty circumstances occur which co-determine action that, if one were properly to include all these in the abstract propositions, one would appear as the greatest pedant and would become trivial to the point of disgust".[348] One must not, therefore, take the "logical forms" in the art of war as "strictly as in philosophy and mathematics," but should seek the universal rather in "most cases"[349]—contrary to the habit of the "theory-inventors" "to give this or that principle the predicate of universality, by which they merely show that they do not know the essence of a theory at all".[350] Out of such one-sided generalizations arise abstract, albeit "brilliant" systems that must ultimately lose contact with

[348] *Strategie*, 71.
[349] *Vorlesungen über den kleinen Krieg*, *Schriften*, 234.
[350] *Die Feldzüge von 1799*, § 67 *Werke*, VI, 84.

the real, since in them the imagination of their creators reigns. In contrast, Clausewitz demands an agreement of "speculative thought" with the "phenomena of the world," a unification or even merging of the "thought" with the "existent," while at the same time allowing the speculative or the historical element to prevail depending on the "nature of the object".[351]

The question then is how this merging is to be brought about—through which the short-sighted, theoretically unfruitful empiricism is just as much to be overcome as empty speculation. Like every theorist, Clausewitz is fundamentally convinced that the respective immediate experience, as it can be gained in isolated and necessarily one-sided situations, must remain on the surface in its isolation and can provide no insight into the essence of things; only when illuminated from a higher vantage point, or through its ordering within broader connections, is it capable of revealing fully whatever generally relevant content is contained in it. Clausewitz opposes this immediate experience several times with the "nature of things" or with the "inner connection" of things,[352] and points to cases "where the deep secret connection of things is not embodied in visible phenomena".[353] Theory must, however, set aside the superficial immediate phenomenon not only in its search for the connection of things, but also for the additional reason that the individual case as such is not capable of theoretical processing, of direct and unabridged incorporation into the theoretical structure. For this reason theory "must adhere to classes of phenomena",[354] which again do not represent mere sums of similar phenomena but simultaneously (implicitly) contain substantive statements—that is, their establishment in itself says something about the structure and constitution of the relevant object of knowledge in its totality. If the principal task of every theory is the "separation of the dissimilar",[355] then each class of phenomena which possesses its own domain within the whole of theory designates specific, mentally isolable features of the real which are grasped in their contrast to the specific characteristics of other aspects of the real. Reality as an object of knowledge thus disintegrates into several poles, around each of which typical or specific properties cluster. Methodologically, it appears most expedient principally to keep in view those poles at which the "most complete opposites" or the "extreme of every kind" become visible—and indeed in awareness of the fact that most concrete cases take place somewhere between them.[356] Seen in this way, the orientation of theoretical thought toward the extreme and the utmost does not amount to an abandonment of the quantitatively predominant aspects of the real, but on the contrary to the only viable path toward grasping their quality, their deeper essence. The conceptual breadth

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[351] *Charakteristik Scharnhorsts Polit. Schriften*, 127, cf. 131.
[352] See e.g. *Vom Kriege*, II, 6 = 335, 339, 340.
[353] *Op. cit.*, II, 5 = 330; cf. VI, 6 = 640 ("the general conditions prevailing deep at the bottom").
[354] *Op. cit.*, II, 2 = 288.
[355] *Op. cit.*, II, 1 = 271.
[356] *Op. cit.*, VI, 30 = 859.

through which several phenomena are jointly grasped in one class proves itself thus more real than the individual phenomena themselves, even though it cannot exist independently of them. The heightened reality of theory surpasses the reality of immediate experience in inner truth; the reality of immediate experience must heighten, condense, purify itself if it is to become theory.

The derivation of theory from this purification, condensation, and heightening of experience forms for Clausewitz the guarantee that the overcoming of narrow empiricism will not lead to the arbitrary contrivances of the theorizing intellect. Theory can indeed grasp the nature or inner connection of things only through abstractions and fictions that must disregard the accidental features of the individual case—and it does so by remaining constantly aware of the difference between the level of the logical, i.e. coherent conceptual grasping, and the level upon which real circumstances unfold.[357] Yet the content of theory does not arise simply through the logically impeccable, contradiction-free concatenation of fictions or abstractions that have become autonomous; rather it emerges in the incessant comparison of these latter with that from which they must abstract in order to exist at all—namely with the concrete cases and situations in their individuality—so that both dimensions, the theoretical and the real, remain constantly present in their necessary connection with and deviation from one another. Progress in theory is therefore not achieved simply to the extent that distance from the individual is gained, but rather through the refinement of the general concepts—refinement which makes their unavoidable distance from the individual largely retractable, by enabling them to withstand the test of comparison with experience. One should guard against seeing in this comparison a mechanical act that could, under arbitrary circumstances and by arbitrary persons, be carried out through observance of certain external rules. For it depends first on which experience is drawn upon—how rich in content, scope, and existential weight the concrete world of representations of the theorist is—so that he can ground his concepts in as much as possible and also expose them to the most diverse empirical tests. On the other hand, not every concept can be compared with experience in its multiplicity; only one that is already seasoned with experience, one that has already arisen out of an idealization or typification of experience.[358] Thus the establishment of an adequate theory constitutes an act of the highest intellectual virtuosity—one that can only be undertaken by a subject possessing both intellectual and human maturity, who can not only carry out logical operations but also has long practiced

[357] This is shown by sentences like: "We must confess that in the endeavor to give these reasons [for Archduke Charles's mode of action] a logical position, we have completely reversed the order of the same", or: "We believe that... in the tact of judgment, in which all reasons, which are pulled apart in a logical development, act as if melted together, the share of each was also somewhat different than its logical analysis shows" (*Die Feldzüge von 1799*, § 58 *Werke*, VI, 17, 18).

[358] "Where nothing belonging to the matter is lost in the abstraction... it achieves its purpose perfectly", it said already in 1809 (*Strategie*, 82).

the observation of human things and is able, with tact and measure, to order the material of a rich experience. As in practice, so in theory that not-further-definable *tact of judgment* remains decisive, in which all intellectual powers and capacities of the subject fully unfold and harmoniously work together.

Clausewitz's method can be summarized thus. In its abstract formulation it sounds simple and compelling; yet everything in it depends on the delicacy with which it is handled in concreto. Clausewitz's own delicacy in the application of his method left, as the concept of pure war shows among other things, nothing to be desired. But a great achievement is also the establishment of the methodological desiderata themselves, which at that time were anything but common property. This means: Clausewitz as methodologist did not in the least further develop the intellectual labor of classical German philosophy, nor did he modify it for his own purposes of knowledge; rather he fashioned his method independently in his lifelong engagement with the questions of the historical-political world and understood it as the appropriate instrument for grasping this and only this world. Already in this his essential difference from any purely philosophical—i.e. ontological or epistemological—approach is shown. Evidently, for Clausewitz these philosophical disciplines are by no means the indispensable birthplaces of methodological or substantive insights which could then be transferred to the domains of empirical knowledge and apply there obligatorily. There is thus no philosophy as *mater scientiarum*. On the contrary, to the extent that philosophical investigations move within their proper domain, they appear to Clausewitz rather as an "unfortunate craving for the abstract regions," from which the Germans ought to free themselves in order to learn from the French "to think clearly and distinctly about the affairs of the state and society".[359] He himself, as he wrote, was "capable of no warm interest in subjects other than political and historical ones",[360] and accordingly he could find no taste in the "dark-laden system" of contemporary philosophy, in the "philosophical dreams," nor in the "unmanly mysticism".[361] This fundamental attitude, fixed already early, conditioned the influences his thought received—not the other way around.

Clausewitz speaks of "philosophy" as a useful and serviceable discipline only when he is appreciating the role of abstraction in theory. Philosophy is thus for him not content but form. Whoever develops his thinking in logical coherence without needing to linger over the roughnesses and asymmetries of immediate experience, and thus to abandon the clear straight line that can be maintained only in abstract theory—*that* person is practicing philosophy.

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[359] *Umtriebe*, Polit. Schriften, 180 f.
[360] Letter to his fiancée of 3.10.1807, Polit. Schriften, 21.
[361] Letter to his fiancée of 17.8.1808 and notes from the years 1807/8, Polit. Schriften, 68, 59.

"Philosophy and experience"[362] interpenetrate within theory as concept, logic, and ideal-typical fiction, on the one hand, and material reality, on the other. Philosophy is thus not the entire corpus of theory but only its conceptual aspect; something else are the empirical data, which in a theory of the historical-political world have a completely different status than in a philosophical theory; and something else again is the aforementioned unceasing comparison of concepts with experience, which relies more on *tact of judgment* than on learnable logical-philosophical rules. The little that Clausewitz adopted from the philosophy of his time (especially concerning Kiesewetter's Kantianism) served him accordingly as a formal educational principle and as a means of intellectual discipline.[363] No substantive similarities can be shown between his expositions and the texts of the well-known German philosophers of his time.[364] The attempt to situate him somehow in the great philosophical and intellectual pantheon of German classicism springs from ideological needs that have little to do with a deeper understanding of his work; decisive here is the wish to construct traditions and continuities that are to serve contemporary political aims. Thus the domestication of Clausewitz within a German humanism goes hand in hand with his liberal interpretation, whereas the Marxists-Leninists are, for different reasons, interested in proving his proximity to Hegel and to the "progressive" thought of his age.[365]

In reality, if one absolutely must situate Clausewitz in the history of ideas, he belongs not so much to a particular German intellectual current as to the tradition of European *realpolitical* thinking, whose beginning and at the same time greatest apex in the modern age remains Machiavelli. To this tradition Clausewitz himself professed when he wrote that no book in the world "would be more necessary to the politician than the Machiavel," and when he held the opponents of the Florentine—who "with a certain indecency had called things by their true names"—in contempt as "a kind of humanistic petit-maîtres" and as preachers of humane morals.[366] Clausewitz, who studied the main works of Machiavelli already in his youth,[367] shared with him the anthropological presuppositions, the resulting conception of politics as power-politics, the purely this-worldly consideration of human matters, and not least the historical-political sense for the peculiarity of the concrete case, for the constant changes and fluctuations of power-political constellations. The second "coryphaeus" of politics, in his view,

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[362] *Vom Kriege*, Preface, 184.

[363] According to a fitting expression by Rothfels, *C. v. Clausewitz*, 23 f. Cf. Linnebach, Die wiss. Methode, 500 f.

[364] Cf. Schering, *Kriegsphilosophie*, esp. 105 ff., 111 ff. On Creuzinger's completely unfounded and dilettantish attempt to make Clausewitz a Hegelian, the essential has already been said in Bleich's review, esp. 95.

[365] See below Chapter VI, note 32.

[366] *Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1807/8*, Polit. Schriften, 63 f.

[367] See the references *op. cit.*, 64, as well as in *Strategie*, 41, 42.

was Montesquieu,[368] and here too it is not difficult to identify the points of attraction and contact. In Montesquieu's work Clausewitz found the historical world in its immeasurable material, political, and moral-spiritual diversity, and at the sight of this grand tableau he could refine his own historical mode of consideration. But it must be doubted that he learned from the manner in which Montesquieu develops his conceptuality in order through it to master intellectually the historical manifoldness—although certain external similarities are present in this respect.[369] The maturation of Clausewitz's method occurred much later than his reading of Montesquieu and took place independently, i.e. through struggle with the substantive questions of his own problem-domain; when Clausewitz began composing the *Hauptwerk*, he still had the impression that Montesquieu had treated his subject "without regard for system and strict connection… in very short, precise, compact sentences," and this he wished at that time to imitate; but then his own "nature, which always drives me to develop and systematize," finally prevailed.[370] From the comparison between Clausewitz's mature synthesis and Montesquieu's work it follows furthermore that the Prussian was interested in the historical-sociological causal aspect, not in the natural-law component of the Frenchman's thought. The conflict between causal and normative that can be observed in Montesquieu[371] is entirely absent in Clausewitz's consistently historical mode of consideration.

Clausewitz's closeness to the historian and sociologist Montesquieu simultaneously indicates his closeness to the Enlightenment as a whole, which first opened up the historical universe in its diversity and multilayeredness and in its conditioning by material and social factors.[372] Beyond this Clausewitz appropriates essential topoi of Enlightenment anthropology: he sees the human being in his tangible corporeality and explains, for example, differences of emotional constitution through the peculiarity of the nervous system, that "amphibian nature" which binds matter and spirit together.[373] From the same conception of human beings he assigns to feeling the function of the most important driving force in the human being;[374] and he also remains committed to the anti-intellectualistic main current of the Enlightenment when he combats abstract systems and accords precedence to the tact of judgment—this refined instinct—over the logical activity of the understanding. Even from the perspective of his

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[368] *Polit. Schriften*, 4.
[369] Cf. Aron, *Penser la guerre*, I, 371 f.
[370] *Vom Kriege*, Preface by the editor, 175.
[371] Kondylis, *Aufklärung*, 451 ff.
[372] *Op. cit.*, 421 ff.
[373] *Vom Kriege*, I, 3 = 241 f.
[374] See above note 37.

relationship to Enlightenment thought, therefore, one sees how little he owes to "philosophy," and indeed to contemporary German philosophy.[375]

[375] See above Section 5. On the related tendencies within the European Enlightenment see Kondylis, *Aufklärung*, esp. 298 ff., 309 ff.

II. Excursus A: Civil and Military

In the prevailing liberal Clausewitz interpretation, the question of the relationships between politics and war is thrown into the same pot as that of the relationships between civil and military [authorities], whereby it is assumed that from Clausewitz's theoretical subjection of war to politics, the commandment of a subjection of the military to the civil authorities can be automatically derived, which must just as automatically result in a moderating sense, i.e., prevent war or at least keep it within reasonable limits. From the preceding expositions, however, we know that the moderating effect of politics in Clausewitz's thought has nothing to do fundamentally with the assertion and the purpose-rational activity of civil authorities; the war of annihilation remains a political war also in the sense that civil authorities can wage it not merely under the pressure of circumstances, but downright according to a purpose-rational assessment of the same. As a theorist and as a soldier, Clausewitz thus by no means shares the naive-simplistic notion widely spread among the historically uneducated and militarily inexperienced, that behind every great war lurks the warmongering of saber-rattling military men or at least the influence of their evil spirit; in contrast to his liberal interpreters, he also shows himself hardly interested in tracking down the disastrous effects of the military spirit, let alone denouncing them. All in all, the relationship between civil and military is touched upon by him only marginally, and the reason for this is very simple: the theory regarding the unity of politics and war grew out of general historical reflections and was not established with the purpose of theoretically justifying the precedence of the civil government over the military leadership. This question, moreover, had a subordinate significance for him if only because the later liberal separation of the departments [*Ressorts*] was not quite comprehensible to him in a time in which the Prince (or a dictator like Napoleon) stood simultaneously at the head of the civil [administration] and the military, while the origin of the higher levels of the civil and the military hierarchy from the same social stratum, which still largely existed, ensured a certain homogeneity of civil and military.

Although departmental thinking, as it took shape in the course of the liberal 19th century and in the wake of the advancing embourgeoisement and technical specialization of armies, remains largely alien to Clausewitz, it is beyond doubt for him that the war plan should be drafted by those authorities who (also) have the say in the civil sphere. His syllogistic reasoning is, however, not the later liberal one; he thus advocates the precedence of the government over the military in the conduct of war not, for instance, because only the government is legitimized by the people and sovereign etc., but for a completely different reason. If war is a part and continuation of political intercourse, then it must be conducted according to the physiognomy and the needs of this intercourse, thus under the direction of that authority which *per definitionem* surveys the entire political intercourse. Clausewitz naturally knows the separation between political (i.e., non-military) and military authorities ("if one wants to speak

technically"),[376] but it is not this departmental and technical-organizational separation that interests him, but rather the difference between the "political and military viewpoint".[377] The political viewpoint should prevail because it grasps the political intercourse as a whole and therefore it alone can judge what the character of the war will be, in order to draft the war plan accordingly and to determine the "main lineaments" of the conduct of war. Clausewitz does not say, however, that the political and the military viewpoint are always and unalterably bound to two separate authorities and that the dominance of the former is *eo ipso* guaranteed by the undisputed precedence of the civil authority. For economic reasons, i.e., in order not to complicate the presentation of the theory unnecessarily, he simply assumes that the civil leadership represents the political viewpoint and the military [leadership] the military viewpoint adequately, but he reminds us at the same time that in reality a "political inadequacy" of the government has occurred "endlessly often".[378] It is thus by no means excluded *a priori* that a military man represents a more political viewpoint than the government itself; whether this is the case must be judged substantively and not based on the clothing of the person concerned. The familiarity of the (upper) military men with the political viewpoint (the counter-concept of the military is incidentally the civil, not the political, although in Clausewitz "political" can also mean civil), so that "the commander becomes a statesman at the same time,"[379] is demanded just as much as the familiarity of the authoritative civil authorities with military questions, so that war goals and political purposes can accommodate themselves to the nature of the means.[380]

If now an "imperfection of insight" is present on neither of the two sides, then the subjection of the "military authority" to the civil one is self-evident, since the latter gives expression to the precedence of the political viewpoint (in the sense of the insight into the whole mechanics and dynamics of political intercourse). The concrete organizational form of this subjection, as Clausewitz envisions it, corresponds however by no means to today's liberal conceptions and, were one to apply it to present conditions, one would have to use Soviet rather than Western patterns as a basis. For Clausewitz has no objection to the "union of statesman and soldier in one person", rather he tends to view it as a good precondition, "if a war is to correspond entirely to the intentions of policy, and if policy is to be entirely appropriate to the means of war". If no personal union of political and military leadership exists, then only one good means remains for the purpose of coordinating the two viewpoints, namely "to make the supreme commander a member of the cabinet, so that it may take part in the main moments of his action".[381]

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[376] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 994.
[377] *Op. cit.*, 993.
[378] *Op. cit.*, 995, cf. 993 ("the deviation of politics from its destination does not belong here").
[379] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 = 250.
[380] *Op. cit.*, I, 1, § 23 = 210. Cf. the good remarks by Gembruch, *Zu Clausewitz Gedanken*, esp. 625, 629.
[381] Thus e.g. Oncken, *Politik*, 69; cf. Sczcepanski, *Politik*, 8 f.

Clausewitz, however, dedicates no long expositions to the concrete organizational form of the hierarchization or cooperation of civil and military, for it is clear to him that with any such form the main goal, namely the coordination of viewpoints, can succeed just as well as fail. The equation of the relationship between politics and war with the relationship between civil and military would incidentally imply the absurdity that the harmony of viewpoints would be automatically given if political and military leadership were united in one person. In reality, only a dispute between civil and military is excluded in this case; the conflict of political and military viewpoint or the neglect of one in favor of the one-sided and harmful preference for the other can occur in the thought and action of one and the same person. And conversely: the clean separation and hierarchization of the departments constitutes in the concrete course of things not yet a sufficient guarantee for the expedient correlation and coordination of viewpoints. In some cases, civilians might weigh military questions better than the military men themselves, while in others military men think more politically than (certain) politicians. Clausewitz knew that the tact of judgment cannot be replaced here either by rule-of-law or dictatorial recipes.

The confusing equation of the relationship of political and military viewpoint with that of civil and military took place gradually in the course of the 19th century. The growing professionalization and specialization of the military[382] and the rise or enforcement of the liberal view of popular sovereignty and the rule of law first made the relationships between civil and military into that problem which we know today and which was largely unknown in the past. A situation arose in which military men, who henceforth had to possess or believed they possessed special, indeed apocryphal knowledge due to the development of technology and the art of war, faced governing authorities to whom military specialized knowledge became increasingly lost, and not merely because of its rising complexity, but also because of the (gradual) dissolution of the social rule of the nobility, which was simultaneously the warrior and the governing estate. In that the military specializes and becomes socially independent, it follows—regardless of whether knowingly and willfully or not—the general tendency of liberal society to disintegrate into several autonomous areas; that which was then called militaristic disposition etc. was paradoxically, at least to a certain extent, the self-consciousness of one of the mentioned areas. With the disintegration of society, however, the disintegration of politics also had to go hand in hand, which now became party politics, so that the military could feel itself as that partial area which was charged *ex officio* with general, i.e., non- or supra-partisan national tasks. The honest or theatrical contempt for "party politics" combined with pride in the possession of a special knowledge, and these two feelings largely determined in varying dosages the attitude of the military toward the just-arising question of its relationship to the governing civil [sphere]. I am not aware that in the Europe of the 19th century a military

[382] On this in general Huntington, *The Soldier*, esp. 30 ff.

leadership ever disputed the right of the government to begin and end war at its own discretion or to determine the extent of war preparations. What the military often insists upon when playing up its growing specialized knowledge is its jurisdiction to determine the military ways and means for the attainment and securing of victory in war. The military men who demand an autonomy of military action in this sense before and around 1900 remain, of course, far removed from the way of thinking of a budding putschist; rather, they attempt to enforce their demands directly or indirectly within the given institutional framework and with the help of the means offered by it (including the backstage, of course). It was only to be expected that they sometimes presented actually political demands as strictly military necessities in order to be able to represent them more effectively with the authority of the specialist (the boundaries were, moreover, fluid by the nature of the matter), or else, conversely, that they dismissed politics as party politics when they wanted to withdraw themselves from its influence—just as it was only natural that their civil adversaries immediately denounced "militarism" when conflicts broke out, regardless of whether they were objectively in the right or not. In any case, it must be noted that in no political-strategic conflict between civil and military did the latter appear absolutely united; a large or smaller part of it stood on the side of the civil government (as well as vice versa), and this shows in itself once again that the difference between political and military viewpoint does not necessarily coincide with that between civil and military.

Already under the impression of the well-known confrontation between Bismarck and Moltke at the time of the Prussian-French War, people in Germany began to confuse or identify the question of the relationship of politics and war with the problem of the relationship of civil and military. Still in 1871 Moltke theorized his fresh experiences and demands to the effect that strategy indeed works for the purposes of politics, and only for these, but remains "completely independent" of it in action, leaving it exclusively to it [strategy], therefore, to find the military means to achieve the set political goals. "Decisive" is the effect of politics on the beginning and the end of the war, politics can also increase or decrease its demands in its course—but precisely because political goals could change, strategy would have to "always direct its striving toward the highest goal which the offered means make attainable at all."[383] Even with limited political goals, an overthrow of the enemy would thus be advisable if it were only possible. The reverse side of this thought is, however, no less important. Moltke does not intend to suggest that political goals should be formulated according to the available military means, so that military overthrow must result in a political one. Moreover, he demands the independence of strategy in action rather for reasons of technical expediency and with the self-confidence of the proven specialist than with the serious intention of co-determining political events in the long run. The same can also be said of those who followed him in these his views. Thus von der Goltz opines

[383] *Strategie*, *Milit. Werke*, II, 2, 291.

in direct connection to Clausewitz that not the influence of politics as such (even on the kind of warfare), but only "bad politics" is to be blamed. "Without capable politics a fortunate conduct of war is not probable." Politics creates the conditions under which the state enters into the fight, especially since the causes of war are of a political character. On the other hand, however, politics must step back after the beginning of the fight, and indeed all the more so, the greater the scale the war assumes in the time of the "peoples in arms"; it gains its influence anew from the moment where a decision or a conclusion of peace appears in outline. With Moltke, von der Goltz is also of one opinion in that war serves politics best under all circumstances with the complete defeat of the enemy.[384]

Influence was not denied to this view of the relationships between civil and military; still von Seeckt confessed to it when he opined that the "military organizational questions" on a large scale were of a "political nature," the goal of the commander—independent of the respective political war goal—was the annihilation of the enemy forces and the commander enjoyed "full freedom" for the execution of the mandate he had received from the political leadership.[385] The assumption would be erroneous, however, that this involved a kind of orthodoxy which underpinned a rigid militaristic consciousness argumentatively. Moltke's basic attitude was critically assessed still around 1900 by leading German military men and military writers, who characteristically wanted to grant the political leadership an even greater role. Thus already von Verdy du Vernois deviates from Moltke's principles in important points. He establishes first a contrast between Clausewitz's thesis that politics permeates the whole warlike act, and Moltke's demand that strategy should proceed "completely independent" of politics in operative action. Both appear one-sided to him, but in reality his own position is directed only against Moltke. For against Clausewitz he forces open doors by asserting that politics is also dependent on strategy, since political purposes often cannot be achieved for lack of military strength. This error in his understanding of Clausewitz lies, of course, in the meanwhile common identification of Political and Civil, so that the political permeation of the warlike act could be nonsensically interpreted as exclusive consideration of civil viewpoints at the expense of military ones. But what von Verdy brings forward against Moltke strikes the heart of his argumentation. Politics, he thinks, may and should influence strategy also during the operations after it has already drafted the initial war plan; a change in the political situation commands the change of the operations design. Significantly, von Verdy adopts from Moltke only the view that politics could increase or decrease its demands in the course of the war. Finally, he speaks out for a close cooperation of civil and military departments and expects political insight and cleverness from the army command—"which however by no means grants it a right to pursue

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[384] *Volk in Waffen*, esp. 124, 127, 128, 129. Similarly Scherff, *Lehre*, 3, 28.

[385] *Gedanken*, 56 f., 63, 64. Cf. Sczcepanski's distinction between conduct of war (*Kriegführung*), conduct of the army (*Heerführung*) and conduct of troops (*Truppenführung*), *Politik*, 5 f.

politics independently".[386] With von Verdy, von Caemmerer declares himself in agreement; he thus considers the influence of politics also during the course of operations to be necessary and traces Moltke's wish for complete operative independence of the military leadership back to the resentments of 1870/71.[387]

Mediating positions were also not lacking in this debate, which was conducted fairly openly and on a high level. Blume strove most extensively for such a position; although in contrast to von Caemmerer he believed in the correctness of Moltke's military tactics in the siege of Paris,[388] on the other hand he did not allow the thesis of the complete independence of strategy in action, "which was evidently formulated under the influence of the experiences of 1870/71", to stand, and even opined that Moltke himself had replaced the word "completely" with the word "predominantly" at a later time. Blume acknowledges that under circumstances politics also has a claim to consideration in the execution of military operations, yet this does not prevent him from placing the center of gravity of its influence, the legitimation of which he derives from Clausewitz's formula, on the decision for war and the conclusion of peace as well as on the diplomatic securing of the military operations, while the planning and execution of these operations remain the task of the military leadership. Decisive here are, as already with Moltke, two considerations: that the politically achievable is conditioned by the military success, thus without such a success even the best politics can be of no use, and that the military goal must deviate from the political one insofar as a limited political goal just as much as a large one presupposes the rendering defenseless of the enemy forces.[389] Nevertheless, Blume emphasized that the statesman and the chief of the general staff would always have to act in agreement, so that "each of the two accepts the factual data and expert judgments of the Other as established factors in his calculation".[390] Still more: although the military considerations are "decisive" for the course of the war, yet "a direction of the military action corresponding to all requirements is not thinkable without political insight, without judgment of the political situation and without perception of the advantages which it offers".[391] This analysis by Blume also made sense to von Freytag-Loringhoven, who moreover agreed with Clausewitz that not the influence of politics, but only bad politics was to be lamented.[392] Bernhardi also proceeds from Clausewitz and makes his mediating proposals for the shaping of the relationship between civil and military with reference to the formula. He relativizes the view that militarily seen the warlike goal is to be set as high as possible, by reminding that from a political view the annihilation of the enemy is

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[386] *Studien*, III, Vol. 1, 51 ff.; II, Vol. 2, 87 ff.; II, Vol. 3, 124, 140.
[387] *Entwicklung*, 69; *Clausewitz*, 105.
[388] *Politik*, 244 ff.
[389] *Op. cit.*, 226 ff., 231.
[390] *Op. cit.*, 229.
[391] *Strategie*, 26.
[392] *Krieg und Politik*, 249 f., 268.

sometimes not desirable and that military partial successes often suffice completely for the attainment of the set political goals; the warlike goal should thus be determined not only on the basis of the available political means, but also with regard to the general political situation. Politics may set new tasks for warfare given a changed political situation and the demand of the commander is unjustified to decide on the possible and attainable in war. On the other hand, however, politics must also take military factors seriously and not interfere in warfare itself; if one does not hit the enemy "substantially," then the whole success is endangered. Before Paris, Moltke's tactics had proven themselves.[393]

On paper one could of course develop different concepts and set the accents differently in each case; this was rather a contribution to opinion- and faction-formation within the officer corps than a final theoretical clarification of a problem which by its nature can be solved only in the respective concrete case on the basis of the existing constellation of forces, the individuality of the participants and the tact of judgment; even the best recipe is not capable here of guaranteeing success in the hour of *action* in war. This was also noted by many a military author.[394] We are interested here, however, above all in something else. Against the background of the legend of the "reactionary" German "Sonderweg" (special path) formed in connection with the ideology of the victors, which supposedly had to lead to the catastrophic end, the assertion has often been made that the German military had detached itself from the Clausewitzian spirit at the latest after 1870/71, questioned the primacy of politics and therefore contributed substantially to bringing about the doom.[395] Now the preceding analysis has shown that the matter was not so simple—quite apart from the fact that victory or defeat in great wars hardly depend on the confession to the unconditional primacy of politics: otherwise Hitler would not have lost his war. In the prevailing German military theory it was never disputed that war proceeds from politics and that the political leadership determines the war goals. But even in the delicate question of the interference of the political leadership in the military aspect of war operations, one could be of divided opinion on the basis of Clausewitz's exposition. For Clausewitz spoke of the influence of the political leadership on the "main moments" of military action and also opined that patrols would not be led according to political considerations.[396] The

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[393] *Vom heutigen Kriege*, II, 192 ff.

[394] Thus e.g. by Binder v. Krieglstein: "Not that strategy goes hand in hand with politics in the closest way is valuable in itself, but it depends precisely on this politics and on this strategy, that is, above all, on the character of the leading persons." "One does not strike and win battles by the monarch and the general standing together in trust and faith, but with the war system that one just has. If this is a quite inadequate one..., then the highest concord... will not lead to victory" (*Zur Psychologie*, II, 269, 310).

[395] Instead of many see Marwedel, *Clausewitz*, 147 ff. The author also discusses the military writers cited by us and proves his theses by the known method of detaching the cited passages from the context. He also does not perceive differences and nuances.

[396] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 996, 992.

difference between the purely political and the purely military is somewhat clear in questions of tactics, but these are for their part often intertwined with strategic questions which can hardly be separated from political objectives. Not only subjectively, i.e., from the view of the specific power claims of civil and military, but also by the nature of the matter, the competence question must arise here in every serious case; if it does not arise, then for the by no means self-evident reason that the matter is running well and unanimity prevails regarding the principles of action. The drawing of boundaries between the competences of civil and military is, however, essentially a question of interpretation and will probably remain one. This is, of course, not noticed, especially in quiet times, because the interpretation of one side has prevailed and is considered irrefutable truth.

For the claim of certain German military men to shape the "purely" military aspect of warfare completely independent of "politics," there were thus also factual reasons, however much historians unversed *in militaribus* and engaged *in politicis* may dispute this. Beyond that, a power claim was undoubtedly hidden in this demand, but it would be an error to derive this power claim without further ado from the specific Prussian-military disposition of those concerned. After the undisputedly brilliant and universally admired achievements of the military leadership during the time of the founding of the Reich, this power claim reflected, quite independent of its patriotic-traditionalistic disguises, the strengthened self-confidence of the new specialists and technicians of war; the abundant general and special military literature which appeared in Germany in the three decades before 1914 documents precisely this self-confidence. A comparison with the views prevailing among military men in France at that time—and such comparisons are indispensable for the understanding of the processes in Germany, although they are avoided by the theorists of the "Sonderweg" partly out of ignorance, partly intentionally—would, moreover, clarify this new quality of the military power claim within the liberalizing and industrializing European society. Thus General Iung expressly falls back on the doctrines of the "Prussiens" regarding the question of the relationships between politics and war[397] and interprets them approvingly and radically to the effect that politics should determine the war goals and then leave their attainment to the military. Tactics, he explains, belongs anyway not in politics, while strategy receives from politics merely its "base d'opérations"; politics, i.e., the cabinet, defines at the beginning once and for all "le point initial de la stratégie"—"pour tout le reste de l'organisme militaire, l'action de la politique n'est que réflexe";[398] "dans toute cette série de combinaisons, résultant de la stratégie et de la tactique, la politique n'intervient qu'une seule fois au point initial, au moment du choix du but... Partout ailleurs la politique n'agit que par action réflexe, par influence".[399] On the threshold of the First

[397] *Stratégie*, 260, 287 f.
[398] *Op. cit.*, 290 f.
[399] *Op. cit.*, 306.

World War Colonel Colin repeated the same principles in a widely read book in an unmistakable manner: "La guerre une fois decidée, il est absolument nécessaire que le général reste libre de la conduire à son gré". Colin went even a step further by opining that the undisputed precedence of the "offensive absolue" in modern war made operative instructions on the part of the political leadership even more superfluous: "Les indications que le gouvernement doit donner au général sur l'objet politique de la guerre se trouvent ainsi réduites à peu de chose... Le plan de campagne doit être l'oeuvre personelle du général".[400] These and many similar statements by French military men were not words without real weight. The strangeness of a war specialist of the new type like Foch vis-à-vis "politics" is known[401]—and equally known are the consequences of this attitude both in the course of the war, when the French military temporarily assumed the factual control of the state, as well as during the peace negotiations.[402] In Great Britain too before 1914 self-interests and special power claims of the army played a role in the redistribution of the centers of gravity of British world policy.[403]

To call upon an unsuspicious witness, let it finally be mentioned that Engels too, in whom the self-confidence of the novel war technician was no less pronounced than in the contemporary military men, emphasized the autonomy and legality of the military factor vis-à-vis "politics": "But naval and military movements, once ordered, are subject not to the desires and plans of diplomacy, but to laws of their own, which cannot be violated without endangering the safety of the whole expedition".[404] In fact, even those who in themselves would like to represent the liberally understood primacy of politics, i.e., of the civil government as embodiment of popular sovereignty, in an unadulterated manner, are forced by the nature of the problem to certain specifications, modifications and concessions when it comes to the concrete practical questions connected with it. Thus everyone must concede that the political leadership, if it is not to influence the course of the war negatively by its interference, must be truly familiar with military and strategic matters (Churchill and Stalin have been great examples of such leadership).[405] Furthermore, no one will be able to dispute meaningfully that the control of the (respective) political leadership over the military must not be exploited for party-political intent, that thus e.g. the career of an officer must depend on his service capabilities and not on his

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[400] *Transformations*, 295.

[401] Cf. Brodie, *Strategy*, 52 f.

[402] On this in detail the two works by J. King mentioned in the bibliography.

[403] "The anti-German, Eurocentric military strategy, which was adopted by January 1906 did improve the position of the army: it had found a role it could play without drastic reorganization and it established a strategic dominance over the Admiralty which was to last throughout the First World War", McDermott, *Revolution*, 111.

[404] *The European War*, New-York Daily Tribune 2.2.1854 = *CW*, 12, 553. The passage is cited in Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 59. Cf. Chap. IV, Note 14 and 15.

[405] On Stalin see the impressive testimony given by such an extremely anti-communist author as Possony, *Jahrhundert*, 162 ff., 276: "Stalin is one of the great strategic and military leaders of modern times".

party-political disposition or other extra-service factors; in the historical reality of the last 150 years, however, the "primacy of politics" was abused for party-political purposes no less frequently than the (allegedly) supra-partisan attitude of certain military men has served as a cloak for certain very partisan or even self-interested designs. A third point is, however, of even greater historical and theoretical significance. Whoever stands up for the "primacy of politics" because he promises himself from it a moderation in war or already in peace, must immediately specify his wish to the effect that he means by this "good" or "healthy" politics.[406] For historical experience by no means proves a causal connection between a weakness of the political leadership or a strength of the military and the extreme intensity of a war; all-round political leadership of the war and extreme intensity of the same can easily go hand in hand if the political leadership sets itself certain goals and seeks to achieve the same with certain means; not on the political leadership *in abstracto*, but on its concrete character, as it shows itself in the set goals and the used means, does it therefore depend. That which was called total war in the 20th century resulted by no means from a sudden strengthening of the military vis-à-vis the civil governments, although many a phenomenon in the First World War could seduce into such a misunderstanding. Here too, however, the position of the military strengthened only after the war had already transformed into a total one; the military had after all predicted and planned a short war before 1914 (s. Excursus B). The even "more total" (sit venia verbo) Second World War, however, knew no Ludendorff and no Foch, in both camps the political leadership sat firmly in the saddle. It is truly piquant to encounter in the National Socialist literature all those arguments almost *ipsis verbis* with which today bona fide liberals want to drive out the evil spirit of militarism. Thus Schmitthener condemns attempts of the military to make itself independent vis-à-vis politics and even takes the views of Blume and Bernhardi reported above regarding the operative autonomy of the military leadership under fire; war could indeed not be politically led, but must be politically steered, political and military leadership should merge in view of the commonality of goals.[407] No less emphatically Foertsch asserts that politics determines not only beginning and end of the war, decides not only on purposes and provision of means, but has also the decisive word in the operations themselves; Foertsch goes even so far as to campaign openly against the views of Ludendorff in this question and to prove Bismarck

[406] Thus Wallach opines in a work characterized by superficial presentation of the events and by conceptual confusion that Hitler had indeed established the unity of politics and war, but not the "true" one, since with him politics had been subjected to total warfare. The same Wallach admits, however, that Hitler had correctly applied Clausewitz's principles until 1941 and furthermore he attributes the debacle in Russia to Hitler's disregard of the proposals of the generals, without however drawing theoretical consequences from this for the scope of the "primacy of politics" advocated by him (*Dogma*, esp. 434 ff.).
[407] *Politik und Krieg*, 292 f., II, 218 ff.

right against Moltke.[408] Whoever wants to serve peace today by similar arguments would do well to inform himself more thoroughly about their use in the past.

[408] *Kriegskunst*, 17-28. This National Socialist distance from Ludendorff's views should give pause to those who view these as a direct precursor to "Hitler", i.e. assume the fatal continuity: from Schlieffen via Ludendorff to Hitler. Ludendorff's critique of Clausewitz, by which he wanted to refute or at least relativize the primacy of politics, rests incidentally on gross misunderstandings. First, Ludendorff criticizes Clausewitz for concentrating exclusively on foreign and neglecting domestic politics and the domestic political prerequisites of warfare (*Der totale Krieg*, 6 f.; *Kriegführung*, 2). In doing so, he fails to recognize that Clausewitz gives priority to foreign policy because, just like Ludendorff himself, he considers the "preservation of the life of the people" (*Der totale Krieg*, 6) as the supreme commandment and understands history primarily as a struggle between peoples. The necessity of domestic political measures to increase fighting ability was clear to Clausewitz at the latest since the Prussian reform effort, and he was also able to observe the connection between domestic and foreign policy in this sense in the French revolutionary warfare. The extent to which domestic policy purposefully supports warfare has nothing to do with the primacy of foreign policy, i.e. this primacy would remain unchallenged even if a political leadership decided for total war; precisely such a decision would imply the insight that the dangers from outside or the corresponding gains have a total character. Second, Ludendorff thinks that Clausewitz's distinction between limited and unlimited wars is no longer valid in view of the present omnipresence of total war (*Der totale Krieg*, 4), without however asking about the criteria according to which a war is to be classified as limited or not: is it about the goal or about the means or the type of warfare, and what are the possible interrelations between the two? Third, Ludendorff believes that in the age of total war politics must also assume a total character and has to serve the "conduct of war" (*Der totale Krieg*, 10; *Kriegführung* 23). Warfare would never have become total, however, if a certain "political intercourse", i.e. a certain objective politics, were not there, which then translated itself into a certain type of subjective politics. If politics has become total in itself, it does not have to subject itself to total war in order to be able to serve it: it generates it or rather it is itself total war and can (as subjective politics or as civilian government) continue to direct total warfare or the military. Ludendorff does not understand that Clausewitz speaks of the primacy of the political viewpoint, which can coincide perfectly with the mentioned commandment of life preservation of the people, whereby war has to serve this commandment. Characteristically, Ludendorff himself has designated war in many places as "the extreme means of foreign policy in the service of the idea of power" and merely demanded an agreement of politics and warfare (*Kriegführung*, 340 f., 341). Seen in this way, Ludendorff's call for the subjection of politics to war amounts to the banality that war readiness should have absolute priority - a principle, incidentally, which is also practiced by most liberal governments, however they may call war readiness. If he nevertheless wants to reverse Clausewitz's formula, it is because he understands it falsely, namely in the sense common today (politics = moderation): a by definition civilian-humane politics would indeed be neither willing nor able to undertake total war preparation and conduct and therefore it would collapse under the pressure of the new war reality. About Ludendorff's vague and non-binding ideas of total mobilization, more will be said in the next Excursus (p. 135 f.).

III. Excursus B: War of Annihilation, Total War, Nuclear War

The previous excursus showed us how fruitful Clausewitz's view of the subjection of the military leadership to the political is, if it is understood only in the sense of the primacy of the political viewpoint over the military one and not, for instance, as a formal hierarchy of authorities and departments within the framework of a liberally constituted community. This excursus is now intended to demonstrate the theoretical fruitfulness and topicality of another basic insight of the Prussian war theorist. We remember how he combined the concept of friction, which initially had a narrower military meaning, with anthropological and cultural-philosophical views and expanded it in such a way that finally everything could be designated as friction that stood between the concept of pure war and real war in all its conceivable shapes. Even the most intensive form of real war could therefore not coincide with pure war—but what Clausewitz imagined under this form was relatively harmless compared to what then came in the 20th century or is emerging today for the future. The question is therefore whether forms of war such as "total" war or nuclear war eliminate the distance between real and pure war and thus ruin the pillar of Clausewitz's theoretical construction or whether the concept of friction can continue to serve as a theoretical key for grasping the specific character of the named forms of war. For the character of a war can be defined precisely by stating the effect of friction in it, i.e., its distance from pure war. In this way, however, the specific difference of the individual forms of war from one another also becomes clear, which proves to be particularly helpful when it comes to countering widespread legends and misunderstandings that have arisen on the basis of the victor ideology of the fateful German "Sonderweg" (special path) and want to derive total war or even a possible nuclear war from the war of annihilation, i.e., the Hitler of yesterday or the Hitler of tomorrow from Moltke and Schlieffen. Appropriate typologizing will teach us otherwise and at the same time provide us with an insight into both the historical character of the two previous world wars and the conceptual status of a possible nuclear war.

In Clausewitz, the term "annihilation" refers exclusively to the (enemy) armed force and does not necessarily mean its physical extermination, but rather its placement into a condition in which it cannot continue the fight.[409] Already as a result of the upgrading of moral magnitudes, the concept of annihilation could not be limited to the "mere physical armed force"; the "moral armed force" had to "necessarily be understood under it".[410] "Principles of annihilation," which have a certain "sphere of annihilation," are for Clausewitz on the one hand "fire" and on the other hand "toils, exertions, and deprivations".[411] The engagement is called an "act of

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[409] *Vom Kriege*, I, 2 = 215.

[410] *Op. cit.*, 226. Cf. the definition of the earlier-used concept of "destruction," *Leitfaden*, § 122 = *On War*, I, 19.

[411] *Ibid.*, III, 12 = 391, 392; V, 4 = 508, 510.

annihilation"[412] because its only purpose is the annihilation of the opponent,[413] because the annihilation of the enemy force forms the foundation of all warlike actions and the last support of all combinations, which rest on it like the arch on its abutments.[414] From the fact that the main goal of warlike action is the annihilation of the enemy armed force and that this takes place mainly in the engagement, follows the central position of the engagement in war generally.[415] But if the annihilation of the enemy armed forces is the goal of the engagement, this does not mean that there are no others outside of the engagement goals; with respect to the last war goal, the engagement goal, i.e., the annihilation of the enemy armed force, remains only a means.[416] Between means and goal in war there is again a discontinuity insofar as the constitution of the means remains the same with different goals. In other words: not every war is a war of annihilation just because the annihilation of the enemy armed force constitutes the goal of the engagements in every war. The war of annihilation indeed forms the antipodes of armed observation, it is characterized by the highest degree of importance and energy, but at the same time one must "demand the greatest sacrifice from the opponent" in it, one must "have the intention of rendering the opponent defenseless, of overthrowing him".[417] The overthrow as the goal of a war of annihilation consists in the annihilation of the enemy troops, in the conquest of the enemy country (and specifically the enemy capital, which amounts to a dissolution of state powers and political bodies and factions) and in the forcing of the enemy will, so that a continuation of resistance is no longer possible.[418]

It has long been noticed that Clausewitz does not include the "spheres of annihilation" of ideological and economic war in his considerations and that accordingly his concept of the war of annihilation means only the political purpose of overthrow, but not the particularly intensive destruction of life and goods against the background of a "total mobilization," i.e., what was later called "total war".[419] Not differently, fundamentally, was the thought of annihilation understood until 1914, not so much in direct reliance on Clausewitz, but rather in the light of Moltke's military achievements and doctrines. For Moltke it was certain that the main goal of the striving for annihilation or "the most prominent object of operation" was solely the destruction of the enemy military power—not the "occupation of a stretch of land" and also not an extensive destruction of the enemy human and economic potential stood thereby in the

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[412] *Ibid.*, V, 4 = 517; I, 2 = 228.
[413] *Ibid.*, IV, 3 = 423.
[414] *Ibid.*, I, 2 = 225; cf. VIII, 1 = 949.
[415] *Ibid.*, IV, 11 = 467.
[416] *Ibid.*, I, 2 = 221, 223, 225.
[417] *Ibid.*, I, 1, § 11 = 201, 200.
[418] *Ibid.*, I, 2 = 214 f.; VIII, 4 = 977.
[419] Linnebach, *Zum Meinungsstreit*, 731, 744 f.; Boehm-Tettelbach, *Gedanken*, 176.

foreground.[420] Even if Moltke went so far as to understand under "weakening of the enemy power" something more than the annihilation of the enemy armed forces ("all resources of the enemy government must be claimed, its finances, railways, foodstuffs, even its prestige"), he was thinking of the relatively harmless example of the war of 1870/71, which according to his view had been conducted with this energy, "and yet with more moderation than ever before".[421] Very important with regard to the later development is Moltke's conviction that a decisive reason why modern warfare strives for rapid decision lies in the complexity and sensitivity of developed economic life, which can afford neither a longer interruption nor a costly war.[422] How deeply these views on the character of a war of annihilation were rooted in the military zeitgeist is shown precisely by the remarks of a military writer like von der Goltz, who wanted to draw consistent conclusions from the new reality of the "people in arms" and moreover opined that "today one has a quite different concept of annihilation than even in the Napoleonic time."[423] The scope of his own concept of annihilation, however, differed hardly from that of Clausewitz and—especially as concerns economic warfare—Moltke. "By annihilating," he wrote, "we have in mind to place him [the enemy] in a physical and moral condition that he feels himself momentarily incapable of continuing the war"; the enemy main army embodies, as it were, the adversary's resistance,[424] it operates thus representatively for the whole potential of the enemy, and its annihilation implies and symbolizes the overthrow of the enemy also in all other areas, without there having been direct or intensive fighting in these. Should this annihilation not suffice to bend the enemy resistance, then the capital as well as places "which could yield means for a new formation of armed forces" must be occupied and finally the most prosperous and sensitive parts of the territory covered with own troops as well as harbors, staple places, most important traffic routes, fortresses and workshops for warlike equipment confiscated.[425] Economic war thus comes only at the end, as an unavoidable extension of purely military operations and if the enemy does not want to draw the consequences from his defeat on the battlefield, does not want to give up his hope for victory. For in general it holds: "One defeats

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[420] *Milit. Werke*, IV, Part 3, 6.

[421] Letter to Bluntschli dated Nov. 19, 1880 = *Ges. Schr.*, V, 196.

[422] *Milit. Werke*, IV, Part 3, 3. The passage reads as follows: "The character of today's warfare is defined by the striving for great and rapid decision. The calling up of all those capable of bearing arms, the strength of the armies, the difficulty of feeding them, the costliness of the armed state, the interruption of trade and commerce, industry and agriculture, in addition the ready-to-strike organization of the armies and the ease with which they are assembled, everything presses for a rapid termination of the war". A tendency of newer warfare to shorten wars was also noted by Clausewitz, specifically for reasons connected with the supply system, see *Vom Kriege*, V, 14 -> 586.

[423] *Volk*, 428.

[424] *Kriegführung*, 12.

[425] *Volk*, 428 f.; *Kriegführung*, 17, 19.

the enemy not by complete destruction of his existence, but by annihilation of his hope for victory."[426]

This view of the war of annihilation drew its persuasiveness not least from the course of the wars of 1866 and above all of 1870/71, in which it was paradigmatically demonstrated how a strategy of annihilation could be placed in the service of limited political goals; many a war theorist even cited the examples of those wars to refute the thesis that in Clausewitz the political end purpose of the war would immediately determine the strategy.[427] The Prussian military did not question this political use of the strategy of annihilation at that time, it thus did not connect the strategy of annihilation with the purpose of the extinction of the political existence of the enemy, and it also demanded no efforts that went beyond the goal of the annihilation of the enemy armed force; there was no economic warfare, and the army waged war detached from the home front.[428] Precisely against the background of this military tradition of thought and this model example of a still fresh war of annihilation must the war plans of the German General Staff before the First World War be understood—and specifically taking into account the fact that this strategic doctrine had meanwhile become European common property and influenced military thought decisively above all in France. Without any doubt, the concern stands in the foreground in Schlieffen's strategic planning to prevent a long war, which would have to affect all sides of the social life of the belligerents, through a rapid victory of annihilation. In this concern, the mentioned Moltkean principles mix with a partly very realistic assessment of newly emerged military and socio-political factors. First, Schlieffen shared the then commonplace that long dragging wars would be impossible at a time "where the existence of the nation is founded on an uninterrupted continuation of trade and industry, and the wheelwork brought to a standstill must be brought into motion again by a rapid decision. A strategy of attrition cannot be conducted when the maintenance of millions requires the expenditure of billions".[429] Second, he took into account the fact that Germany had lost numerical superiority vis-à-vis France since 1870, which is why a rapid war outcome could only be achieved through the attack on the enemy flank and the endangerment of the enemy lines of retreat: "Only in this way can really decisive results ending the campaign quickly be won, and these are indispensable for us, especially in the case of a war with two fronts".[430] Third, he took the latest development of weapons technology seriously and saw in it an additional confirmation for the strategic preference of the flank attack. Should both sides undertake a

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[426] *Volk*, 11.
[427] Thus Delbrück, *Strategie*, 9.
[428] See Ludendorff's apt characterization of the war of 1870/71, *Kriegführung*, 30.
[429] *Der Krieg in der Gegenwart* (1909), *Ges. Schr.*, I, 17. Cf. *Dienstschriften*, I, 86: "With armies of millions, these [i.e., long wars] cannot be endured. The cultural state of the peoples, the expenditure of the immeasurable means required for the maintenance of such masses demands rapid decision, speedy end".
[430] *Dienstschriften*, II, 171.

frontal attack with holding together of forces, careful basing etc., then "undecided battles, long dragging wars" would be the consequence.[431] Nothing could in this case exclude a repetition of the occurrences in the Russo-Japanese War; with the use of mass armies, modern firearms would call into life a form of combat in which no decisive victory was to be won anymore.[432] And a fourth, this time purely political reason moved Schlieffen to seek the rapid decision: the fear of the interference of other powers.[433]

It must be noticed that here the strategy of annihilation, specifically in the form of the attack on the flank, is given preference for plausible factual reasons and on the basis of a realistic assessment of the power relations or the German inferiority and not, for instance, in doctrinaire stubbornness. Schlieffen's contemporary military critics also faulted not the decision in favor of the strategy of annihilation as such, but rather what appeared to them as underestimation of moral magnitudes and as associated overvaluation of detailed planning in the sense of a great encirclement action.[434] Later events showed, however, that under the circumstances of trench warfare a breakthrough could not be achieved even by high morale. In retrospect, not only representatives of "Prussian militarism" opined that Schlieffen's original plan carried "the greatest probability of all others within itself to end the war successfully and above all quickly";[435] opponents of the same also admit that the mentioned plan would probably have had an "overwhelming initial success" had it been implemented in its original form by an energetic Chief of the General Staff.[436] These chances of success conceded from all sides testify to the—at least military—closeness to reality of the Schlieffen Plan, which was based on the mentioned consideration of essential factors. Already Moltke had emphasized the necessity of an exact weighing of the general situation before any decision in favor of the strategy of annihilation,[437] and also military writers who by no means believed in the obsolescence of Clausewitz's second

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[431] *Ibid.*, 1, 86.

[432] *Der Krieg in der Gegenwart*, *Ges. Schr.*, I, 14, 17. The experiences of September 1914 showed, by the way, the justification of Schlieffen's warning against the breakthrough attempt, see Ritter, *Schlieffen-Plan*, 50 f.

[433] Cf. what he writes about Bismarck in 1870/71, *Ges. Schr.*, II, 17.

[434] See e.g. Bernhardi, *Vom heutigen Krieg*, II, 162 ff.; on Schlichting's criticism of the "mechanical heads" see Mette, *Geist*, esp. 180 ff.

[435] Thus e.g. v. Seeckt, *Gedanken*, 60 f.

[436] Thus Craig, *Politics*, 280. It is not clear why the initial success here would not also have been the decisive one. Craig thinks England and France would have continued the war for a long time, but this is rather a projection of the events of the Second World War into the First than a real possibility — especially for France. Moreover, an early and decisive German victory would most likely have averted the later American intervention, which was fatal for the German side. Precisely the then prevailing belief that the coming war would last a short time (see below) would have contributed significantly to ending the war after a rapid and clear victory by one side.

[437] "Whether it is right to plan battles in war at the risk of great losses such that they aim at the destruction of the opponent, or to take the safe path of arriving at the purpose through a series of less decisive successes, that depends essentially on the political conditions", *Milit. Werke*, IV, Part 3, 214.

kind of war and even regarded the same as the only conceivable one in armed conflicts such as e.g. the Russo-Japanese War, declared that under the concrete circumstances of a war against France only the victory of annihilation, i.e., the decisive success through rapid offensive, could help.[438] Schlieffen, who incidentally, as his last war game proves,[439] was thoroughly open also to other strategic possibilities besides those concretized in the Plan, had incessantly before his eyes the elementary *political* fact that Germany would be the weaker belligerent in a future war and could therefore assert itself only through a rapid victory, if at all. That was the decisive viewpoint into which the observation of the statesman and that of the military man had to flow together.

It is therefore conceptual confusion when e.g. the view is expressed that Schlieffen's Plan was not "political," thus "purely military," because it had been drafted exclusively by the military or because it violated Belgian neutrality. War plans were drafted by the military in other countries as well and then presented to the political leadership for approval; Schlieffen acted "politically" completely correctly in this regard and gave the political leadership of his country the opportunity in time to take note of his plan and if necessary to reject it.[440] Now one could object that the plan was (tacitly) accepted or not rejected because the military was strong and the political leadership was weak, because thus overall the "militaristic" element in the state and in the minds retained the upper hand. This description of the situation is not readily accurate—at any rate, the German General Staff before 1914 neither behaved warmongeringly nor recommended a preventive war, even in times of crisis.[441] But even if we wanted to assume a preponderance of the military department or "spirit," this says nothing yet about the validity or at least plausibility of the political viewpoints contained or implicit in the Schlieffen Plan. It is by no means excluded that even a strong civil government hardly infected by "Prussian militarism" could regard the consideration as decisive that Germany as the weaker side would not endure a long war and therefore had to fight for a rapid victory. The violation of Belgian neutrality would then be a very probable conclusion from this decisive consideration—and it is by no means historically established that civil-liberal governments tend less to such violations of international law than "militaristically affected" ones: the violation of Norwegian neutrality planned and partly also executed by the Western liberal governments at the beginning of the Second World War, which then led to the German invasion, forms a very instructive example of this.[442] No German political leadership, regardless of what constitution and direction, could lightly reject such a great, indeed presumably decisive military advantage as the violation of

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[438] See e.g. v. Caemmerer, *Clausewitz*, 113 ff.
[439] Liss, *Schlieffens letztes Kriegsspiel*.
[440] Thus Ritter, *Schlieffen-Plan*, 97.
[441] *Ibid.*, 111, 138.
[442] On the course of events see Liddell Hart, *History*, 55 ff.

Belgian neutrality, especially without knowing whether France would respect this neutrality equally and whether Great Britain would make its participation in the war dependent on its respect; if this were not the case, then a morally and under international law impeccable German attitude would have meant the abandonment of the hope for victory, especially mindful of the German inferiority and the new weapons technology, which placed considerable obstacles in the way of a breakthrough strategy. Whoever therefore thinks that a different social position of the military in a liberal Germany would *eo ipso* have resulted in a different policy, overlooks the immanent necessities of foreign policy and moreover assumes the already often encountered naive and historically unproven equation of Civil with Humane and Moral. Here, however, we do not want to moralize, but—renouncing the cheap wisdom of hindsight, which is only the wisdom of the victor—to understand the inner logic of a position as well as the reasons that made it appear plausible at that time.

Any civil government had to be impressed, moreover, by the unanimity in which at that time the military men in all of Europe—and in France, as we shall see immediately, perhaps even more emphatically than in Germany—advocated the absolute primacy of the offensive within the framework of the strategy of annihilation. "Tacitly an offensive spirit is laid at the basis of all theoretical speculations, and largely also of practical exercises," stated von der Goltz still before 1900.[443] The same admitted that the new developments in weapons technology etc. had made the attack more difficult, on the other hand, however, he believed that only through the attack and in it could the—in his eyes decisive—intellectual and moral forces of the army be mobilized; "the purpose of all fights, the overthrow of the enemy armed power, can finally only be achieved through the attack," "to wage war means to attack".[444] Von der Goltz was incidentally of one opinion with most military writers when he stuck with the precedence of the offensive despite consideration of the new complicating factors. Thus Schlichting wrote that the new firearms would favor the defensive only in the "first act," but in the second would give the "correctly handled offensive operation" an "annihilating effect." Trench warfare is sought only by the "less skillful leadership," which may calculate good chances only against an attacker operating with formalistic means in deployments and formations, but must succumb to the correctly led offensive.[445] Even if it is stated that the spade has meanwhile become a weapon and its use must therefore be taught and practiced similarly carefully as that of the rifle, even if it is demanded "to carry the one-sidedness of our... pure infantry school attacks to the grave"—even then it is held fast that "the attack draws the greater advantage from the perfection of

[443] *Volk*, 130.
[444] *Ibid.*, 233 ff., 240.
[445] *Grundsätze*, 1, 112.

weapons...".[446] Bernhardi also believed that modern artillery favored the offensive, and although he agreed with Clausewitz in the view that the defense as a form of combat is stronger than the attack, he nevertheless added that "in the overall context of warfare the offensive procedure is far superior to the defensive, especially under today's conditions".[447] More reservedly expressed himself Blume, who under equal conditions considered the defense, especially in view of the new firearms, to be stronger, yet at the same time granted the attack, in which the moral factors come primarily to bear, very good chances.[448] Rather rare value had voices like von Caemmerer's, who recommended a moderation of the enthusiasm for the offensive in reliance on Clausewitz's remarks on the relationship between attack and defense; it appeared to him as "a matter of serious importance not to shake the confidence in the defense. No commander... is in the position to always proceed offensively".[449] Nevertheless, such reservations and warnings could not effect much, especially when one considers that even a military historian like Delbrück, who endeavored to place the second kind beside the first as a historically equal form of war, admitted in the same breath that the first kind was "the one recognized today and for today's conditions alone natural and reliable".[450]

Whoever would now like to assert that the German defeat in the First World War was the deserved punishment for this enforcement of the unconditionally offensive spirit, must commit the absurdity of assuming at the same time that Germany's enemies had won the war for precisely this reason. Even a cursory glance at French military literature around 1900 leaves no doubt that the spirit of the offensive beyond the Rhine had struck possibly even deeper roots than in Germany itself and that the war plans of the General Staff as well as of the unofficial and semi-official strategists (mostly they were also high officers) were drafted not in consideration of political and "diplomatic" factors, but on the basis of a more or less rigid dogma of the strategic offensive. In doing so, one made no secret of one's high esteem or even admiration for the German military men and military writers, whose statements and writings were quoted, paraphrased and interpreted en masse. It is no exaggeration if one wanted to say that French military thought before 1914 was a mere adoption and commenting, sometimes also a radicalization, of contemporary German military theory. Left-wing Frenchmen who suspected the domestic military of bad things could make no greater reproach to it than this inclination to imitate the "Prussians." Thus wrote Jaurès, who envisioned a new genuine people's army thoroughly different from the German pattern of the *armée de caserne*: "La première et essentielle

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[446] Hoppenstedt, *Schlacht*, 228, 232, 233. This was incidentally the prevailing opinion among European observers of the Russo-Japanese War, see Howard, *Men against Fire*, 518.
[447] *Vom heutigen Krieg*, II, 13, 34.
[448] *Strategie*, 166 ff., 199 ff.
[449] *Entwicklung*, 76.
[450] *Strategie*, 5. Cf. above note 30.

revanche... c'est de libérer des prises du militarisme allemande la pensée française".[451] Jaurès turned vehemently against Clausewitz's French admirers, such as Gilbert, and had no understanding for the "prussomanie" of the military men even when Prussian warfare was presented as a mere continuation of the Napoleonic; for Napoleon was for him the gravedigger of revolutionary warfare generally.[452] In fact, the appropriation of German military thought was cultivated in France under the comforting pretext that modern warfare actually originated from the "ideas of Napoleon,"[453] which had then been continued by the "Prussians"; the French had been awakened from their deep sleep by the war of 1870, "qui nous donna pour adversaires les espris formés par l'enseignement de l'histoire, l'étude des cas concrets, car depuis le commencement du siècle c'est de la sorte que Scharnhorst, Willisen et Clausewitz avaient formé le commandement de l'armée prussien".[454] Foch quotes often and extensively Moltke, Willisen, Clausewitz or von der Goltz to support his views on the character of modern wars as "luttes de peuples," on the decisive significance of man and moral magnitudes or on the necessity of the mobilization of all intellectual and material resources of the warring country.[455] Clausewitz, admittedly as exegete of Napoleon, is also his key witness when he declares the strategy of annihilation and battle to be the only possible form of modern war.[456]

Foch is of course no pioneer of military-theoretical thought, rather a remarkable representative of the direction just prevailing in his homeland. The reception of the "Prussians" and the almost unanimous approval of the strategy of annihilation in its connection with the primacy of the offensive were already accomplished facts in France around 1890. As General Derrécagaix wrote at that time in a widely read handbook with reference to von der Goltz and in the self-confident tone of the proclaimer of an orthodoxy: "l'offensive est le seule parti à prendre pour un général qui veut vaincre".[457] For Derrécagaix, the decisive importance of the first battle or the first success in a modern, i.e., short and intensive war also stood firm.[458] In this earlier phase, however, the thought of the offensive was kept within certain limits out of consideration for the still superior German armed force as well as for the strategic advantages that the occupation of Lorraine e.g. offered the German side, by the concern for sufficient defensive guarantees; as the then still influential strategic school of the "counter-offensive" represented by Bonnal believed,

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[451] *Armée Nouvelle*, 57.
[452] *Ibid.*, 59 ff.
[453] Foch, *Principes*, 37.
[454] *Ibid.*, 4.
[455] *Ibid.*, esp. 3 f., 29 ff., 36.
[456] *Ibid.*, 40 ff., 264 ff. The following passage is typical of many others: "La guerre moderne, pour arriver à ses fins: imposer sa volonté à l'adversaire, ne reconnaît qu'un moyen: la destruction des forces organisées de l'adversaire. Cette destruction, elle l'entreprend, la prépare par la bataille... elle la réalise par la poursuite" (265).
[457] *Guerre Moderne*, I, 380; cf. II, 167 ff.
[458] *Ibid.*, II, 479.

in the event of a war the vanguard of one's own troop should catch the hostile attack and hold the main mass of the hostile armed forces until a large-scale counter-attack could be initiated, which under these circumstances would be immune against the danger of being outmaneuvered. This strategic concept was rejected by the supporters of the unconditional offensive, who gained the upper hand to the extent that the military balance shifted in favor of France and enforced the appointment of Joffre as Chief of the General Staff; in their sense the war plan of 1913 was also drafted.[459] Under the influence of this military dogmatics, the French fought even defensive battles in the First World War in a stubbornly offensive manner, which only caused senseless bloodshed and even greater losses than those of their enemies.[460]

As an advocate of the unconditional offensive, Foch opined: "L'attaque deci-sive, tel est l'argument suprême de la bataille moderne, lutte de nations combattant pour leur existence, leur indépendance ou quelque intérêt moins noble, combattant en tout cas avec tous leur moyens, avec tous leur passions".[461] The "attaque décisive" was for him "la clé de voûte de la bataille",[462] and these his statements received, moreover, an additional emphasis through the conviction that the basic truths of the art of war are eternal and unchangeable.[463] The rejection of the school of the "counter-offensive" implied in Foch's remarks was justified by Grandmaison still a short time before the war in two lectures that became famous. According to Grandmaison's view, the exaggerated concern for defensive "sûretés" led to a fragmentation of one's own forces and to the paralysis of the offensive spirit and its initiatives. It is fatal, however, to lower the offensive to the moral level of the defensive, which is characterized precisely by an "infériorité morale." On the contrary, the offensive effects an increase in the self-esteem of the troop and an intensified mobility, which guarantees the element of surprise and thwarts the hostile maneuvers; the enemy is thus finished as soon as he is forced into the defensive and thereby discouraged. "Les facteurs moraux ne sont pas les plus importants; ce sont les seuls qui comptent à la guerre".[464] It is obvious that Grandmaison basically merely further develops the above-mentioned view of the "Prussians," that only in the offensive can the decisive moral factors be fully deployed. The way in which he defends himself against the accusation of "Germanophilia" is incidentally characteristic. He assures that he wants to adopt the insights of the Germans not because they are German, but although they are German and in order to be

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[459] On this see Carrias, *Pensée Milit. Française*, 278 ff.; Williamson, *Politics*, 117 ff., 218 ff.; Porch, *March to the Marne*, 213 ff.

[460] Brodie, *Strategy*, 57, 60. As Brodie (56) recalls, the British military leadership in the First World War was "hardly less enamored of the strategic offensive than the French".

[461] *Principes*, 278.

[462] *Ibid.*, 281, cf. 321 f.

[463] *Ibid.*, ix.

[464] *Deux Conférences*, 22 ff., 7 (note); the quote on p. 27.

able to fight the Germans more effectively;[465] this more effective fighting of the Germans, however, he expects not, for instance, from a partial abandonment of their military theories, but on the contrary from their radicalization. The weakness of the Germans lies in their refusal to apply their own principle to the last consequence, i.e., to commit themselves to the unconditional offensive, for which their all-too methodical spirit is to blame; thus they needed all too much time to deploy their army for battle, and this could prove to be their Achilles' heel.[466] Only through a lightning-fast and risk-taking offensive could the former masters of the offensive thus be beaten. The army leadership would have to be oriented and predisposed accordingly. Colin, who incidentally was unable to discover any preference for the defense even in Clausewitz,[467] formulated this practically highly important demand as follows: "L'attaque est le mode d'action normal à la guerre... Nul ne doît être admis au commandement des armées s'il n'a une disposition naturelle à l'offensive".[468]

Just as in Germany, hardly any voices were raised in France either that doubted the offensive character and the rapid termination of a future war;[469] one thought no differently in the British General Staff either.[470] And likewise European common property was another basic conviction of Schlieffen, namely that of the economic impossibility of a long war duration. This view already expressed by Moltke (s. a.) had many followers in Germany,[471] but its great influence shows itself precisely in those who did not want to accept a stricter economic determination of the course and duration of the war;[472] at any rate, even the few who spoke of a longer war

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[465] *Ibid.*, 9 (note).
[466] *Ibid.*, 32, cf. 47 f.
[467] *Transformations*, 257.
[468] *Ibid.*, 288.
[469] As the only exception General Bonnal named Lieutenant Colonel of Artillery Mayer, who described the characteristics of the future war as follows under the pseudonym Manceau in the "Revue Militaire Suisse" in May 1902: "L'une de ces lignes [sc. deux lignes fortifiées parallèles, également impuissantes dans le sens du front ne pouvant réussir (à percer) de front, cherchera à déborder l'autre. Celle-ci, à son tour, prolongera son front, et ce sera un concours qui s'étendra le plus, dans la mesure où son effectif le lui permettra... La ligne s'arrêtera à un point d'appui, à une mer, à une montagne, à la frontière d'une nation neutre" (cited in Bonnal, *Les Conditions*, 170 f.).
[470] Gooch, *Plans of War*, 288; Howard, *Men against Fire*, 521 f.
[471] For Freytag-Loringhoven it was obvious that "in the future the outbreak of a war... will bring about an economic crisis", which is why he also pleaded for "initiative and attack as the surest prospects for a rapid termination of the war" (*Krieg und Politik*, 255, 273).
[472] Thus, von der Goltz pointed out on the one hand the factors which would necessarily give the war a dragging character at times (expansion of the fortification system, immense growth of mass armies), but on the other hand he thought "that material means... come to an end sooner than human power" and that "the simple continuation of the state of war can under certain circumstances exert a downright decisive influence given the sensitivity of modern economic life"; if only because of the costs of maintaining the armies, the governments would therefore have to "insist on the uninterrupted use of the armed forces by the commanders" (*Volk*, 139 ff., 134 f.; *Kriegführung*, 16 f.). Bernhardi considered the opinion "too

reckoned with a war duration of about one year.[473] Even stronger perhaps was the belief in Great Britain before 1914 that the threatening economic catastrophe would shorten or even avert a war.[474] Both in this country and in France, this belief in its connection with the absolute dominance of the strategic thought of annihilation set certain limits to war preparations, which in the light of the unforeseen later course of the war must be described as narrow.[475] No differently in Germany, in which "Prussian militarism," despite legends still existing, behaved according to the all-European pattern and even lagged behind the military efforts of the French. During his almost fifteen-year tenure Schlieffen hardly exerted pressure for the increase of the German army in order to reach at least that number which he needed for the execution of his plans.[476] In addition, German food supply and industry remained dependent on imports in 1914, which additionally strengthened all authoritative bodies, including the economic ones, in the view that in the event of war the decision had to be sought as quickly as possible.[477] At the same time Germany lost numerical superiority vis-à-vis France, since peace strengths did not grow automatically with population numbers; Germany conscripted slightly more than half of those fit for service for the troop, France on the other hand up to 90%.[478] Shortly after the war, the French General Buat therefore had no difficulty in refuting the "generally spread" view that Germany had been stronger than France at the beginning of the war or that it had strained its forces to the highest measure of its capacity; the reason for this was in his eyes that Germany had reckoned with a rapid decisive campaign in France.[479] In the German inability to draw advantage from the considerable superiority in mobilizable contingents during war preparation, he saw incidentally a factor that largely determined the outcome of the war: "With greater foresight it [the German General Staff] could have put together 600,000 men in divisions more than it actually did. With this plus of divisions it could without difficulties have pushed its outflanking maneuver against the left French-English flank up to the coast of the North Sea and

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far-reaching" that a war would immediately bring about economic collapse, nevertheless he did not doubt the necessity of an extreme effort in this regard and predicted a decline in strength if the war lasted longer (*Vom heutigen Krieg*, I, 69 f., 77, 79 f.). Cf. v. Falkenhausen, *Der große Krieg*, 278.

[473] Burchardt, *Friedenswirtschaft*, 19 ff.

[474] French, *British Planning*, Chap. 1, esp. 18 f.

[475] *Ibid.*, chap. 5, esp. 83; Challener, *French Theory*, 91 ff.

[476] Ritter, *Schlieffen-Plan*, 69. Ludendorff distorted the facts in the interest of his current polemic when he wrote in 1922 that "for the majority of professional soldiers" it had been clear even before 1914 that the coming war would mobilize huge resources, "while the politicians wanted to know nothing about it" (*Kriegführung*, 12, cf. 52 f.). However, Ludendorff himself admits indirectly that neither side could clearly foresee the character of the future war: "Of course, now the connection of things is clearer in the economic field as well. Only the events could bring the full overview" (*ibid.*, 60).

[477] *Der Weltkrieg*, I, 46. On the lack of German preparation for an economic war and the relatively slow conversion to a war economy cf. Dix, *Wirtschaftskrieg*, 151 ff.

[478] Schmitt, *Vergleiche*, 1, 24 f. Cf. the survey of the arms race before 1914 in Miksche, *Kriegsbild*, 74 ff., from which it emerges indisputably that the German Reich was by no means leading in this field.

[479] *Deutsche Armee*, 9, 11, 19, 25.

the English Channel. Then the naval bases closest to England would have been occupied and Great Britain directly threatened. Even more: the Battle of the Marne would have been impossible".[480]

The war preparation of all sides, inadequate measured against the later development, contributed paradoxically not to the shortening, but on the contrary to the prolongation of the war. For when before the solidification of the fronts a successful breakthrough would have been possible with appropriate artillery use, the necessary artillery and even the ammunition for it were lacking.[481] The military situation had already gotten into a dead end when the transition to war economy began.[482] The war of annihilation did not take place, and precisely the belief in its inevitability had stood in the way of its sufficient preparation. With regard to our questioning, we can thus divide the First World War into two periods: a first short phase, which stood in the sign of the unrealized thought of annihilation, and a second, much longer one, which was characterized by the material battles and the hitherto unknown and unforeseen effort of the war economy in the homeland. The observation is now interesting that a similar periodization can also be undertaken regarding the Second World War, especially if we take the kind of warfare and the accompanying economic effort of National Socialist Germany as a yardstick. Two differences must of course be kept in mind here, which however are not decisive for us here: that in the first phase of the Second World War the war of annihilation in the form of the Blitzkrieg was successfully practiced by the German side, and that this first phase lasted considerably longer than the corresponding phase of the First World War compared to the second, which was dominated by "total war." In both world wars (in the First from the Battle of the Marne on and in the Second since the stopping of the German army before Moscow) it turned out that the German side was economically unprepared for a total war, and indeed precisely as a result of the belief in the possibility of a rapid victory of annihilation. Most likely Germany would not have been able to win a total war even then if it had mobilized its forces "totally" from the beginning and with the intention to wage a total war: the potential of its enemies was simply superior, quite apart from the fact that Great Britain e.g. from 1940 on and also at the height of the mutual effort was able to reach a higher degree of mobilization than Germany.[483] Yet this does not affect the fundamental theoretical considerations we want to make here in the slightest.

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[480] *Ibid.*, 76.

[481] Wieland, *Zur Problematik*, 41; Feldman, *Army*, 52, cf. 64.

[482] French, *British Plannings*, chap. 10; Woodward, *Britain and the War*, 453 ff.; Fontaine, *L'Industrie Française*, passim; Hardach, *Franz. Rüstungspolitik*; cf. above note 69.

[483] Measured by the percentage of national income spent for military purposes, see the figures in Carroll, *Design*, 184 f.

The revival and enforcement of the thought of annihilation in National Socialist Germany was rooted precisely in the conviction that the First World War had not been able to become a war of annihilation, and simultaneously in the will to avoid a totalization of the war unsustainable for Germany in the long run; in the attempt to draw the correct lessons from the First World War lay thus a more or less clear insight into the character difference between the war of annihilation and total war. Interestingly, this simple and at the same time fundamental observation is made in an East German Marxist-Leninist military handbook much more factually and soberly than in very many Western analyses, which in their pathos against "Prussian" or National Socialist "militarism" throw everything into one pot and thereby indeed serve the good cause, but hardly the understanding of things. After the ability of the "German imperialists and militarists" to "learn from suffered defeats" is recognized in the mentioned text (even if only within the insurmountable limits of their "class horizon"), it is conceded that "the fascist General Staff had developed essentially correct views of the military character of this war as a war of movement, of the role of its initial period as well as of the significance and deployment of the air force, the armored troops and the submarine weapons, which had newly emerged".[484] Reference is obviously made here to methods and means of the "Blitzkrieg," in whose concept Hitler's striving crystallized to make the thought of annihilation strategically fruitful again with the help of modern weapons technology. Undoubtedly Hitler's traumatic experiences from the First World War decisively influenced his strategic thinking, so that a repetition of "total" war or of what was then regarded as such became for him the priority strategic commandment; "total" war was Hitler's nemesis, not his plan.[485] Characteristic for the line of development pursued here, into which Hitler's strategy can also be classified, is the fact that military writers such as Erfurth, who wanted to link up with Schlieffen in the belief that his inherently correct war plan had never been applied and therefore his basic idea had also never been refuted, did this with reference to the fact that now the increased mobility of motorized armies had substantially improved the chances of concentric operations and therefore a "rapid and indeed annihilating, not 'ordinary' (Schlieffen) victory" would become possible.[486] This argument was also used by

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[484] *Modernes Militärwesen*, 27. It is also correctly stated that Germany had indeed in the first period of the war practiced the "method of simultaneous destruction of the entire forces" of weaker opponents, "but the entire war could not be decided by this warfare" (*ibid.*, 21).

[485] According to a striking expression by Carroll, *Design*, 92: "Total war was Hitler's nemesis, not his design. He turned his back upon it as long as he could", cf. 105: "It was England's stubborn persistence, Russia's refusal to capitulate, and the engagement of the United States which forced Germany into the kind of war Hitler had vowed he would never fight". Cf. Milward, *War*, 26 f.: "Hitler was only one of many strategists seeking an alternative to the murderous and apparently useless infantry and artillery campaigns of 1915 to 1918".

[486] *Vernichtungssieg*, 101 f. Modern means of communication, Erfurth thinks subsequently, neutralize the disadvantage of the concentric operation feared since time immemorial, namely the lack of coordination. "The entry of the engine favors this development and easily exposes the one in too close formation to the danger that the net is thrown over him like lightning and he is deprived of freedom of operation".

Guderian within the framework of his plea for the armored weapon. Were there no air and armored weapon today, he wrote, a decisive attack success against an approximately equal opponent would be much more difficult to achieve than in 1918; the armored weapon would have to be used utilizing the moment of surprise and with mass deployment not "to help any single, however tradition-heavy weapon to successes," but "to win the future battles, and indeed so thoroughly and quickly and with such far-reaching effect that thereby a speedy end of the war is brought about".[487] In contrast to this, authors who were skeptical of the new weapon were rather ready to assume that a future war would presumably last a longer time.[488]

According to this concept of the renewed thought of annihilation, the economic war preparation of National Socialist Germany directed itself. That is: a far-reaching, let alone total mobilization of the economy for war purposes failed to materialize until the beginning of 1942 because the strategy of the Blitzkrieg did not require this.[489] The legend of the reconstruction of the German economy after 1933 on the basis of a comprehensive war preparation has been refuted long ago, as is well known. Between 1933-1938 armament expenditures made up less than 40% of state expenditures or roughly 10% of the gross national product—a percentage that was increased substantially in 1938-1939, although at the beginning of the war Germany produced monthly only about as many aircraft and fewer tanks than England; in the year 1941 the total armament production increased hardly compared to the previous year; from September 1940 to February 1941 a general decline in armament production even made itself felt, whereby aircraft production alone went back by about 40%.[490] Only after the failure of the Blitzkrieg in Russia, i.e., since the beginning of 1942, did German armament policy follow the path already taken by the Western Allies, although this turn was executed hesitantly, especially on the part of Hitler.[491] The influence of the modernized thought of annihilation on the shaping of armament production showed itself, however, not only in its total volume, but also in its composition. The concept of the Blitzkrieg foresaw, as is well known, a series of short wars with limited goal, each of which in itself required no substantial increase in armament production as a whole; absolutely necessary, however, was the adjustment of the existing war-economic potential to the next enemy, i.e., to the physiognomy and the special needs of the next war. Thus the focal points of armament production shifted a few times in the years 1939-1941, whereby the

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[487] *Achtung - Panzer!*, 199, 205. Cf. Eimannsberger, *Kampfwagenkrieg*, esp. 233 f.
[488] Thus e.g. the National Socialist Foertsch, *Kriegskunst*, 130, 167 f.
[489] Klein, *Economic Preparations*, 25.
[490] *Ibid.*, 17, 3 f., 193, 188. Carroll wants to relativize Klein's results for the time before 1938, but agrees with him in essence. For the statement that after 1936 arms expenditures were greater than any other single state expenditure does not yet mean an absolute priority of the armaments industry within the overall economy; Carroll emphasizes himself by the way that the German economy before 1938 was "no war economy" (*Design*, 181, 188 f.). Cf. Milward, *War*, 24 f.
[491] Milward, *War*, 56, 75.

necessity to stick to the existing scarce raw material basis caused production cuts in one area for the purpose of production increase in another (thus e.g. production increases in tanks were to be achieved by throttling ammunition production etc.). In the campaign against France ammunition production was doubled, only to be screwed back immediately after the victory to a level that was reached again only two years later; at the end of 1941, when the Red Army was already preparing its counter-attacks, Germany produced the lowest ammunition quantity since the beginning of the war as a result of the expectation of a lightning success in Russia that had arisen in the summer of 1941.[492]

Despite this real situation, the impression consolidated even abroad during the first years of National Socialist rule[493] that Germany was consciously steering toward a far-reaching militarization of its economy, whereby militarization, politicization, nationalization etc. were mixed with one another and viewed as necessarily belonging essential tendencies of the National Socialist regime in the succession of "Prussian militarism" etc.[494] Not only did no extensive economic planning for the purpose of total mobilization take place, however, but it was also practically proposed by no one in earnest. This results already from a reading of the abundant "defense-" or "war-economic" literature of the pre-war period, if one only disregards the often martial tone and concentrates on the content of the proposals made in each case. Common to the representatives of this literature is the wish to draw the correct economic lessons from the experiences of the First World War,[495] so that Germany would not in future have to enter a war unprepared and thus as it were defeated from the outset. Beyond that, however, the questions and the solutions differ considerably from one another and moreover the envisioned war readiness of the economy does not flow into a concrete strategic view—least of all is a connection established thereby between total mobilization and total warfare.[496] Not infrequently nothing other and nothing more is recommended than to follow the examples of Great Britain and the USA proven in wartime, whereby it is simultaneously emphasized that the war-economic effort of the state has a limit and, although today the "war-economic organizations" can no longer be thought away from the peace economy, yet "their permanent maintenance with public funds can hardly be sustained by any state"; the burden becomes smaller if the requirements of national defense to be fulfilled in peace are made serviceable to the peace economy.[497] The example of the Western powers is expressly resorted to in the

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[492] *Ibid.*, 26, 79 f.; Milward, *Deutsche Kriegswirtschaft*, 39, 45, 52.

[493] Even the Intelligence Service succumbed to it, which overestimated the level of German equipment by 40-50%, see Klein, *Economic Preparations*, 19 f.

[494] Typical Szczot, *Doktrin*, 48 f.

[495] Hellmer, *Wehrwirtschaft*, 10 ff.; Korfes, *Grundsätze*, 9 ff.

[496] These features of the "defense" or "war economy" literature are also noted by Szczot (*Doktrin*, 50, 54), without however realizing their significance for the general character of this same literature.

[497] Rothe, *Wirtschaftskrieg*, 63; on Great Britain and the U.S.A. see 24 ff., 35 ff.

intention of keeping defense economy and planned economy conceptually and factually apart; state interventions in property are indeed necessary in war, the "prudent state leadership" should however undertake them "sparingly and only as far as absolutely necessary".[498] Fundamental importance is usually attached to the distinction between defense economy (i.e., the mere preparation of economic mobilization in war) and actual war economy, and a gradual conversion from the former to the latter is provided for;[499] war is thus understood as a qualitatively new condition and not as a simple extension of the activity of a society anyway totally mobilized at every moment.[500] National Socialist authors had incidentally represented the view even before 1933 that despite all necessity of mobilization, specifically in the armament industry, it would not be possible to keep the entire armament and equipment for a people in arms ready already in peace, since modern means of war become obsolete rapidly and constant renewals of reserve stocks would cause "unaffordable costs"; most expedient appeared therefore the finding out of the respectively best weapon type with simultaneous preparation of mass production in case of need.[501]

The model example for this content-related vagueness and indecisiveness of the proposals for economic war preparation is none other than General Ludendorff, who indeed pleaded in his emphatic manner for total mobilization and warfare, yet had to admit that he had absolutely nothing concrete to recommend in matters of defense and war economy: "What measures in the entire economic field... the individual countries have to take, is of course not to be answered. Principles cannot be established, unless it be that people and army must lack nothing".[502] Only one thing he clarified unmistakably: his aversion to the planned economy, thus to the confusion of war and planned economy: "The centralization, created by the Jew Walter Rathenau, took away everyone's joy of creation and self-responsibility and worked accordingly inhibiting".[503] If now despite everything the impression of the preparation of National Socialist Germany for total war arose and spread, a reason for this lay in the fact that the National Socialists envisioned a truly total mobilization precisely in that area which was most conspicuous: the area of propaganda and ideology, i.e., the so-called "spiritual warfare". The totality of the ideological claim preceded in the history of the National Socialist regime the economic war

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[498] Fischer, *Wehrwirtschaft*, 25 f., 116 f.; on the defense economy measures of the Western powers see 142 ff.
[499] *Ibid.*, 21, 101 f.; cf. Hellmer, *Wehrwirtschaft*, 25. In a note on the same page Hellmer states: "a uniform and generally recognized definition of the word 'Wehrwirtschaft' [defense economy] does not exist today yet".
[500] For many authors, the clear separation between peace and war economy or between national and defense economy amounted to the same thing, see Hellmer, *Wehrwirtschaft*, 17; Korfes, *Grundsätze*, 33.
[501] Hierl, *Grundlagen*, 14 f. In this Hierl, who incidentally also points to the examples of France and the USA, knows himself to be in agreement with v. Seeckt, although he rejects his idea of a professional army (28 ff.).
[502] *Der totale Krieg*, 30.
[503] *Ibid.*, 47.

preparation and "total" warfare in time; National Socialist propaganda strove for a unification of ideology, compared to which the central control of the economy in the service of war preparation lagged considerably behind, and at the same time it contained central motifs that presented war and warfare in a positive light. Total mobilization became (at least tentatively) a reality rather in the spiritual-psychological than in the economic and military field. Ludendorff demanded in general "spiritual unity of the people" as the basis of total war,[504] others wanted to base "spiritual defense readiness" or even "spiritual warfare" specifically on National Socialist ideology and on the "spirit of the Führer".[505] Many abroad and in Germany confused the intensity of this often successful psychological-ideological effort with the extent of German economic and military war preparation, on the other hand, however, some advocates of total mobilization[506] also erroneously considered their own vague, albeit emphatic plea for unity and high morale of the people as a tangible program that could satisfy strategic requirements.

The result of the preceding expositions reads as follows: the development toward total war in the course of the First and Second World War resulted not from the attempt to apply the strategy of annihilation in this or that form, but quite on the contrary from the fact that the strategy of annihilation could not be applied consistently and to the end; to want to derive total war from the thought of annihilation is logically and historically false.[507] If war transforms into a practically uninterrupted battle of material, in which the civilian population also participates

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[504] *Ibid.*, 11.

[505] See e.g. the writings of Billmann and Blau cited in the bibliography.

[506] Not only Ludendorff, but also E. Jünger, who in his famous essay has little to report on his actual topic, namely total mobilization, and quite general things at that, in order to go into the alleged causes of the German defeat of 1918 instead, which in his view were also the causes of the absence of a truly total mobilization: meant here is the lack of "a simple and great idea firmly rooted in the German essence". This idea is supposed to carry the readiness for mobilization and this readiness is in turn supposed to form the prerequisite for mobilization in the technical sense; for the technical side of total mobilization is not the decisive one (*Die tot. Mobilmachung*, 16). Accordingly, Jünger also makes no attempt to connect the idea of total mobilization with a concrete strategic or economic concept; with him, as with others who were not poets, it remains rather an aesthetic and existential category. Taken at their face value, mobilization ideas like Ludendorff's or Jünger's hardly differ from what Foch demanded even before the First World War: "exploitation à l'extrême des masses humaines, animées de passions ardentes, absorbant toutes les activités de la société et pliant entièrement au service de leurs besoins les parties matérielles du système" (*Principes*, 29). Cf. Ludendorff, *Der totale Krieg*, 10: "The essence of total war literally claims the entire strength of a people".

[507] Such a derivation was attempted by Wallach in his book on the dogma of the battle of annihilation, of which mention has already been made (Exkurs A, note 31). The author is so incapable of logical thinking and of classifying historical contexts in his pathos against the militarism from Schlieffen via Ludendorff to Hitler, that he does not ask himself at all how statements are to be reconciled with his main thesis such as e.g. that at the end of 1914 a new era in warfare had begun (*Dogma*, 198), that Falkenhayn pursued only limited goals and husbanded his forces (244 f.) or that Hitler in the Russian campaign deviated from the annihilation strategy contrary to the view of the generals (395, 407).

partly directly (e.g. partisanship) partly indirectly (working rear area) substantially, then precisely the one great and decisive battle of annihilation becomes impossible, which can only take place if a total or long war is out of the question already due to the available means. For "total" mobilization before the war and during the war calls material and human forces into life that cannot be annihilated in one battle or in a few. In both the First and the Second World War, the most important belligerents possessed the potential that could outlast the battle of annihilation. Meant here are not merely the economic capacities, but also the socio-political framework conditions of "total" mobilization as they are given in an industrial, (potentially) egalitarian mass society. Theoretically important is that use was finally made of these capacities, although this was initially (especially at the beginning of the First World War, when the relevant experiences were still completely lacking) not necessarily or not intended by all belligerents. In other words: in the transition from the war of annihilation to "total" war, a clear case exists in which—to link up with our questioning following Clausewitz—objective politics retained the upper hand over subjective politics; it was confirmed in a dramatic way that the enemies "give the law to each other," by forcing one another, out of fear of the next move of the other and in anticipation of the conclusion or culmination of the possible development, to bring sooner or later (almost) all available means of war into the field. It would be a serious error to think that this powerlessness of subjective politics and this subjection of the logic of the purpose to the logic of the means, if one may express it so, had to do not primarily with the objective potentialities and the dynamics of the situation itself, but with existing bellicistic, militaristic etc. inclinations of some belligerents (one must distinguish here, however, between the causes of the wars and the form which the conduct of war finally assumed and which alone is at issue here); through this error one can indeed explain the past from the view of the victors, but not protect oneself from many a bad surprise in the future. The—incidentally often rather willing—capitulation of subjective politics before the destruction capacities of the objectively given political intercourse or "social condition" took place equally in countries with different prehistory and socio-political structure, which however were all industrial mass societies. Not representatives of "Prussian militarism" theorized "total" war first, but this happened first in France already during the First World War.[508] And in the Second World War the logic of the available means, i.e., the logic of the destruction possibilities offered by objective politics, seized also the civil governments of the West, which adjusted their strategy to the total annihilation of the enemy and let themselves be guided thereby rather by military considerations.[509]

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[508] See above all the books by A. Séché, *Les Guerres d'Enfer*, Paris 1915, and G. Blanchoy, *La Guerre Nouvelle*, Paris 1916, whose content is reported by Carroll, *Design*, 30 ff. In 1918 L. Daudet published his book *La guerre totale* in Paris.

[509] See on this the excellent work by Armstrong, *Unconditional Surrender*, esp. 6, 162 ff., which moreover works out the reasons why liberal democracies too are susceptible to the ideology and the sustaining

In the orthodox thought of annihilation, the enemy armed forces were the target of annihilation. One started from the idea that the armed forces represent the entire material and moral potential of a country and that the defeat of these armed forces must amount to a defeat of the country concerned. The defeat on the battlefield thus had a real and at the same time a symbolic meaning: if the armed forces were overthrown, then everything was automatically considered as overthrown with them which, although itself not standing on the battlefield, had linked its fate according to general opinion with the fate of the fighting armed forces. If now war becomes "total," this means first of all that the target of destruction is no longer merely the enemy army, but the entire material and moral potential of the enemy nation; the armed forces constitute here indeed the fighting tip, but not the entire deployable or deployed fighting power of the nation—and precisely for this reason their defeat on the battlefield cannot *eo ipso* be recognized as the final defeat of the nation, which must find its reflection in a conclusion of peace on this basis. Everything that extends the fight beyond the radius of action and suffering of the armed forces means a step toward the totalization of war. In this respect it remains highly interesting that approaches to such an extension before 1914 were present not among the classical strategists of annihilation, but rather among those who designed the concept of a strategy of attrition as a (milder) war alternative to the strategy of annihilation. Thus Delbrück taught that the strategy of attrition had, in contrast to the strategy of overthrow, which revolved around the one pole of the battle, two poles, namely the battle and the maneuver, and thereby he wanted to have understood under "maneuver" such operations as "every kind of economic damage through devastations, contributions, disturbance of trade, with sea powers especially through blockades"; through such "maneuvers" great wars would sometimes have been decided "entirely without battle" and great conquests made.[510] Still fifteen years before the First World War Delbrück criticized on the basis of this view of the character and effectiveness of the "maneuver" the then popular view that a long war could not take place for economic reasons alone. In contrast, he believed: "Economic damage will not prevent the future war, but on the contrary, it will become an intensive means of warfare. If it should be true—which is of course by no means already proven—that great decisive battles can no longer be fought, then the cutting off of economic life can nevertheless bring the opponent to submission".[511] Delbrück adheres here still to the contrast of (annihilation) battle and maneuver or of strategy of overthrow and attrition: economic war is thus possible precisely because a strategy of overthrow appears improbable. On the theoretical level, however, a third possibility also remained open, which was not discussed by Delbrück, but became historical reality precisely through the content-related expansion of the "maneuver" foreseen by him: the connection of precisely this "maneuver" with

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mood of total war (see esp. 250 f.). On the policy of the Western Allies in the Second World War cf. Fuller, *Entartete Kunst*, esp. 302 ff.

[510] *Strategie*, 20, 16, 17.

[511] *Zukunftskrieg*, 218.

the thought and purpose of overthrow. In the light of the experiences of the First World War, it has then rightly been remarked against Delbrück's contrast of strategy of overthrow and attrition that due to the enforcement of the purpose of overthrow on both sides their maneuvers had served rather the increase than the attenuation of the intensity of the war; the strategy of attrition would under these circumstances not have meant the incomplete employment of the fighting potential, not lower energy and boldness, but contained within itself the most violent thing that peoples are capable of.[512] To this Delbrück agreed factually when he subsumed Falkenhayn's war concept and Verdun under the strategy of attrition.[513]

For the transition from war of annihilation to total war, however, the extension of the annihilation targets beyond the enemy armed forces, already provided for in the concept of attrition, does not suffice. This requires in addition a high or "total" degree of mobilization, i.e., one which places the available material and moral potential of the nation in the service of the warfare just going on. In the wars of pre-industrial societies the purposeful annihilation of non-military objects, i.e., of economic goods etc. for the purpose of "attrition" of the enemy occurred anything but rarely, unknown however was here the necessity to transform all existing economic etc. means into direct or indirect weapons, i.e., to harness them for war purposes in this or that way—m. a. w.: in wartime the "homeland" did not have to work for the front. Armament and war material in general were of such a nature that for warfare by and large that sufficed which had already been prepared for it in the preceding peacetime; what of it had to be replaced occasionally in the course of war operations was produced with relatively little effort, at any rate one did not reckon with a substantial renewal, let alone an enrichment of the material means of war during the operations themselves. The warriors were bound to their armament more or less personally, losses of armament went hand in hand with the loss of warriors, and vice versa, and therefore the production of weapons and war material beyond the existing limited possibilities of use was senseless. With the dawn of the industrial age this condition changes gradually, a separation between warriors and material means of war enforces itself over time, which represents a concomitant of the industrial mass production of these latter. The mass production of weapons and war material by (large-scale) industry and the existence of mass armies that can make use of them, with simultaneous dissolution of the personal bond of every warrior to a piece of the available armament: these are the absolute socio-economic prerequisites of "total" war—or rather, the existence of these factors has made the transition from war of annihilation to total war a fatality. The main characteristic of total war, namely that the "homeland" works for the "front" and that therefore the greater or greatest part of the people and of the national income serves the war, remains amalgamated with the fundamental fact that the warriors can and must now use several weapons and war materials

[512] Hobohm, *Delbrück...*, 221, 222; cf. Schering, *Kriegsphilosophie*, 65 f.
[513] *Falkenhayn...*, esp. 253 f., 277.

one after another, which require constant replacement, renewal and improvement, since the same large-scale industry that produces them simultaneously produces the means for their destruction. The (rapid) destruction of the means of war is made good precisely by the mobilization of the "homeland," which ensures their rapid replacement and possibly increase. Developed industry, high destructiveness and destructibility of weapons and war material in large battles of material, detachment of the weapon from the person of the warrior and mobilization of the homeland go hand in hand and result in total war. Only an industrial society enables the rapid mass production and transport of war goods, which are subsequently consumed by mass armies. And only on this basis arises the close connection of "front" and "homeland."

It is now two different things whether all resources available at wartime are placed in the service of warfare or whether still a long time before the war the available resources are used for the large or largest part for war preparation. A total mobilization in peacetime is unthinkable if only because the already produced and stored war goods cannot be destroyed fast enough, i.e., because the replacement of the old ones by new or newly invented and more effective ones must take place considerably slower than at the time of a total war. The transition from the necessarily limited mobilization in peacetime to "total" mobilization in wartime depends—according to the experiences of the two world wars—on several factors, it can pass through several stages and assume several forms. Theoretically interesting, however, is not so much this transitional phase, but rather the final phase of "total" mobilization, thus the question of its highest possibilities and extreme limits. Of course, this question poses itself differently in each case, i.e., it must be investigated in *concreto* each time what is mobilized, whose forces of which state are claimed to the utmost. The countries that have so far approached a total mobilization most closely are known to be Great Britain and Germany in the years 1942-1944.[514] One can imagine that even this immense effort can be intensified further at least for some time. One way or another, however, the question to be posed following Clausewitz is whether a war at its conceivably most extreme totalization becomes a pure war, namely a mere act of violence, or remains a political one, namely continuation and expression of a certain form of political intercourse. To answer this question, of course, one must disregard moral and humanistic viewpoints, consideration of the extent of destruction and human suffering, and strive for a consistent application of Clausewitz's criteria.

An overview of the general physiognomy of the two total wars to date shows now that they have by no means been a single, uninterrupted and unchangeably intensive act of violence, in

[514] In Great Britain armament made up 64% of the gross national product in 1942, 63% in 1943 and 62% in 1944; in Germany the corresponding figures were 55%, 61% and (estimated) 60-64%, see Carroll, *Design*, 184 f.

which the belligerents would have participated with a onetime utmost summoning of their forces, i.e., like wrestlers during a single fight with irrevocable outcome. Neither the cohesion of the social body of each belligerent nor the warfare itself—if one considers it as a whole, in all its aspects and phases—have ever reached the absolute degree of density and intensity, otherwise the war could not have lasted so long; in no moment could the belligerents unite everything they disposed of in a decisive point and fight with concentrated force the concentrated force of the enemy. The warlike action has known shorter or longer pauses or suspensions, the effect of friction thus made itself thoroughly felt, and for that reason alone these total wars formed no mere expression of hatred and passion: the occurrence of suspensions was precisely a concomitant of the striving present on all sides to correlate purposes and means with one another effectively in one way or another and to apply violence not blindly and recklessly, but on the basis of considerations of expediency, regardless of whether these proved to be accurate or not. The two total wars have thus been, by Clausewitz's standards, not pure, but political wars. If "moderation" often fell by the wayside, this was not due to their deficient political character, but rather to the enforcement of certain political viewpoints among the belligerents. About these wars the same can be said as Clausewitz said in his time about the Napoleonic ones, namely that they approached the shape of pure war and thereby left the classical war of annihilation behind, since they considerably reduced the suspension in war, which is to be understood not only temporally, but also in terms of the extent of the national war effort, compared to earlier wars. If we wanted to characterize them on the basis of the talk of the "double kind," we would undoubtedly have to reckon them to the first kind, but understand the concept of annihilation or overthrow in a qualitatively new sense, whose breadth and intensity corresponded to the substantially increased strength of the means of war which had now become necessary for the attainment of annihilation and overthrow.

A new great war between great industrial nations would actually have to be such a "total" war again. What stands in the way of this today is not a weakening of the factors that produced total war in its time, but rather the exceedingly great development of some among them, namely the technical-industrial ones. "Total" war was characterized by the use of weapons of high destructive power, yet these did not suffice, despite all inflicted damage, to substantially prevent the replacement of the destroyed by work in the "homeland"; destruction and replacement (or even renewal and improvement) formed the two halves of a circle, which also, as said, contained suspensions and frictions. If this circle is now broken by such an intensification of destruction that must thwart a replacement of the destroyed in foreseeable, practically relevant time, then an essential prerequisite for total war must fall away, which simultaneously means the elimination of the above-described bond of "front" and "homeland"; for either the "homeland" is then so damaged that it can hardly produce anymore, or the "front" or the army (a front in the old sense could be missing here) is so battered that it is unable to use

any new war material. It appears as if the massive use of nuclear weapons of great destructive power would effect precisely such a breaking of the circle characteristic of "total" war, and therefore a consistently waged nuclear war would not be a total war. This becomes plausible if we understand the terms in their real historical meaning and not in the light of emotionally charged associations which want to suggest a necessary continuity or even identity of war of annihilation, total war and nuclear war simply because nuclear war will entail "total annihilation" etc. The words "total" and "annihilation" or "destruction" have, however, a different sense here in each case, since they refer to different states of affairs. In "total" war, as it was realized in the second phase of the two world wars, the mobilization of the available material and moral potential was to be total, but the "total" mobilization did not have to result, as experience has shown, in total destruction in the literal sense of the word; the destruction was indeed unusually large, but could be made good in relatively short, indeed historically seen actually minimal time. In a consistently waged nuclear war it would behave exactly the reverse: a "total" or at least by today's criteria immeasurable destruction would be brought about by weapons whose production and use would not have required a "total" mobilization. In fact, this decoupling of mobilization in wartime and extent of destruction forms the great novelty of nuclear war; it would be quite possible that here the entire war potential, especially the economic and moral, of each side exercises no noteworthy influence on the outcome of the war (the significance of this potential for war preparation is of course disregarded here), since this outcome could be decided even before any possibility of mobilization of the mentioned potential.

This applies of course under the assumption that the nuclear war is waged consistently, i.e., with immediate, uninterrupted and complete use of nuclear weapons, without the remaining armed forces receiving the opportunity for noteworthy intervention in the war events. A characteristic of such a war would be indeed, to recall Clausewitz, the absence of any pause between the warlike acts, thus absence of suspension and friction. In this respect, a nuclear war that were waged only as a nuclear war could be regarded as a pure war in Clausewitz's sense, yet this respect does not suffice for a complete identification of nuclear war with pure war. For in this latter the use of the available war potential must be not only pauseless, but also total, whereas in the consistently waged and most likely short nuclear war only a part, admittedly the most destructive one, of the war potential would be used, whose destructive power would indeed make that of any other weapon (initially) practically superfluous, but would not include it; here, therefore, the moment of the total use of the whole concentrated fighting power would be missing, in which everything and everyone are drawn into the vicious circle of violence and hatred and nothing remains outside that could cloud the pure war in its purity. But even apart from that, it cannot be assumed from the outset and without further ado that the possibility of a consistent nuclear warfare, i.e., of an as it were pure war in the nuclear realm with exclusion of

others, is already guaranteed by the "perfection" of a quasi-autonomously functioning technology. Here friction and suspensions are quite probable, which, like all others too, would result from "human weakness" (the word is to be understood in Clausewitz's sense)—thus either from psychic or technical failure; a collapse of the nervous system of the actors would cause the same friction as the collapse of the information system. For nuclear war, Clausewitz's dictum that war is the territory of chance could apply more than for any other. The real shape of a nuclear war would therefore presumably differ considerably from the simplistic picture of a war of buttons, on which cold-blooded technocratic monsters press without hesitation until the fatal end. Not to be excluded are the withdrawal of one side after the first exchange of blows and after the speedy realization of an own (growing) inferiority or the nuclear renunciation on both sides, should the first exchange of blows suggest a macabre draw. Conceivable would also be a mutual nuclear exhaustion as a result of the primary concentration of nuclear strikes on the nuclear targets of the enemy. And in connection with this, finally, various combinations of nuclear and conventional war are to be considered; highly competent modern strategists consider them at any rate to be more than probable, indeed normal.[515]

Clausewitz's fundamental conceptual system, and specifically his central distinction between pure and real war including the criteria supporting it, has thus become obsolete neither through the experiences of "total" nor through the possibility of a nuclear war. On the contrary, correctly understood and applied, it still forms the best theoretical guideline for grasping their specific character. And in another important respect too the theorist Clausewitz remains dramatically current, namely through his insight that in war one side gives the law to the other. We have discussed how this happened in the two world wars during the transition from war of annihilation to "total" war and how thereby objective politics retained the upper hand over subjective. With regard to the possibility of a nuclear war, these historical experiences say that neither the (subjective) certainty of a total mutual destruction nor the attempt, often undertaken with reference to Clausewitz, of a proof of the moderating influence of civil politics on war suffice to banish the specter of nuclear war. For this purpose there is only a single way, namely to show that the giants wrestling for world domination can or must wage only wars of the second kind due to their constitution or the constitution of world-political intercourse. As long as this proof is not provided—and who can provide it?—the assertion remains meaningless that nuclear war cannot (may not) represent a continuation of politics. Whoever asserts this understands on the one hand politics in the subjective sense and on the other hand identifies it with the moderating factor. Nevertheless, nuclear war can be the continuation of a politics—of a not "moderate" one anyway, but also of a subjective one, as it incidentally has already been once in 1945 to a limited extent. Nuclear war is a continuation of an objectively understood politics in

[515] See Exkurs D.

the sense that it forms the kind of war of those societies which are capable of producing nuclear weapons due to their general character and level. That nuclear weapons can be means of politics is proven by their deterrence function. That *nuclear* war can be a means of politics (at least in the objective sense of the word) is again not denied by all.[516] And if the probability of an enforcement of the objective givens of political intercourse against subjective political views is at least very high, then it also does not make much sense to recommend the return to the time of hedged wars for protection against nuclear destruction. The hedging of wars was not the result of a certain intellectual attitude or a wise insight, but only of the effect of objective socio-political factors—from the predominantly noble composition of the officer corps to the relative relief of the European front by colonial expansion. Whoever raises the demand for a hedging of war *hic et nunc* should first ask himself through which form of (world) political intercourse it can be achieved; the nostalgic recollection of the (idealized) *ius publicum europaeum* can help little in this.

[516] See Exkurs D.

IV. Marx and Engels

1. General Remark

If one surveys the largely scattered, incidental statements by Marx and Engels on the phenomenon of war, which are related to concrete cases, with the intention of unifying them theoretically or reconstructing a reasonably coherent theory of war from them, one is easily tempted, especially as a non-Marxist, to focus on the relationship between the (power) political and the economic factor and to point out discrepancies between the Marxist principle of the primacy of the latter and the often implicit, sometimes even explicit assertion of the independent effect of the former. Such references are certainly not illegitimate and in a certain sense also unavoidable, but they often remain focused on the negative and do not do justice to the wealth of insights provided by Marx and Engels. Instead of refuting historical materialism for the hundredth time, it therefore seems much more fruitful to establish typologies based on the material that the theoretical attention, historical sensitivity, or political interest of Marx and Engels brought to light, which would encompass historically and sociologically paradigmatic cases; this would result not in a hierarchy erected on the basis of this or that "primacy," but in an inventory that could serve for general orientation. Whether it concerns the interaction of conquest and social formation or the social functions of the military, this inventory proves rich enough to guarantee a fundamental theoretical access to the corresponding historical-theoretical, military-sociological, etc. questions. Also from this perspective, it becomes apparent that Marx and Engels must be counted among the great pioneers of modern historical and social science not only methodologically, but also in terms of content.

This typological procedure in close connection with concrete cases initially suspends the question of the priority of this or that factor, on the other hand, however, a not merely methodologically opportune and provisional, but programmatic exclusion of similar problems would ultimately be no less unfruitful than their formulation in the language of the abrupt juxtaposition of politics and economy, of power factors and economic magnitudes. Not coincidentally, such juxtapositions are never accompanied by a definition of what is understood by power and economy. In fact, any such attempt at definition would be confronted at the very first attempt with the elementary double problem of what the power structure, the power function, and the power-political framework conditions of economic activity are and what the economic supports, components, or even prerequisites of social and political power are. Certainly, the question of the specific nature of politics or power and economy is not answered by referring to their intertwinements, but here we only want to emphasize that after Marx and through his work, precisely that undifferentiated juxtaposition of these two magnitudes, which is often mobilized against him, had to become problematic. A certain paradox is not lacking here. For precisely by trying to bring the economic background of power-political processes into consciousness, Marx expanded and dynamized or politicized the concept of the economy and

finally gave the "relations of production" a meaning not far removed from Clausewitz's "political intercourse"; we will also see that in some social formations he regarded war as a normal form of economic intercourse. What prevented him—purely theoretically seen—from proceeding conversely and understanding the economy wholly or partly from the power factor was not so much the lack of insight into the symmetrical or also asymmetrical connection of economic and political power, but rather a too narrow or superficial conception of the essence of power in general. The primacy of the economic factor can be demonstrated relatively effortlessly if, like Engels in his attack on Dühring's weak theoretical fortresses, one reduces power to violence and then demonstrates the impotence of naked physical violence within an economizing, i.e., among other things weapons-producing, world. In reality, however, the economy just as much as the entire sphere of ideology, e.g., through its historical development, has contributed essentially to the transformation of violence into power, to the substitution of violence by power, or even to the (partial) displacement of violence by (legitimized) power relations; only in civilization or culture and through civilization or culture could the physically weaker rule over the physically stronger, only in this way could rule and power be exercised without permanent application or (direct) threat of (direct) violence. Marx and Engels, just like many critics of them, remained with the juxtaposition of economy and politics or power to the extent that they took to heart the bourgeois-liberal notion of the basically unpolitical, i.e., economizing apart from (power) politics, *homo oeconomicus*.

The eschatological component of the Marxian view of history stands in the way of a fruitful engagement with Marx's and Engels' statements on war just as little as the thesis of the primacy of the economy, as this is represented not with regard to every concrete case, but on the highest level of historical generalization. At the end of history or prehistory, if you will, the abolition of all wars is supposed to take place, among other things, but this in turn is tied to the occurrence of certain economic and socio-political conditions, and this means: as long as these conditions have not occurred, wars remain unavoidable, thus causally conditioned and as such a possible object of scientific consideration among others. Still more: if the abolition of wars is achieved through the occurrence of the mentioned conditions and not, for instance, through moral appeals and inner moral improvement of people, then the consideration of the wars still taking place has nothing to do with moral concepts and explanations, it remains bound to political and social viewpoints and is based on an analysis of the respective stage of history and the forces acting within it. Already in earlier times Engels had emphasized that "moral categories like justice, humanity, and freedom may sound very nice, but prove absolutely nothing in historical and political questions",[517] and he repeated it in later years, this time even with express reference to the question of war: "As long as there are exploiting and ruling peoples and classes

[517] *Der demokratische Panslawismus*, Neue Rhein. Zeitung 15. 2. 1849 = MEW, 6, 273.

on one side, exploited and ruled ones on the other, so long will the use of cunning alongside that of violence be a necessity on both sides, against which all moral preaching remains powerless".[518] Under these conditions, the general attitude of Marx and Engels toward the phenomenon of war can be classified as neither bellicose nor pacifist, just as little as that of Clausewitz. Not every war appears historically fruitful and welcome in itself and as such, often it entails only senseless destruction, on the other hand, however, no objections are raised against wars and violent conquests if social development is thereby propelled forward. War is then catalyst and part of a cosmogony, it instills no fear if one knows that history tends to break its path over "remains of empires, crushing entire generations"; "whoever knows how to appreciate the eminently revolutionary character of the present age... will certainly not shrink from facing a historical question, because of the consideration that its proper settlement may bring about a European war".[519] In a rotten Europe, war is expected to shake up the healthy elements and awaken hidden forces,[520] and, by putting nations to the test, pronounce judgment on their viability: "As exposure to the atmosphere reduces all mummies to instant dissolution, so war passes supreme judgement upon social organizations that have outlived their vitality".[521]

It cannot therefore be surprising that Marx and Engels had little use for that liberal-economistic pacifism that wanted to replace wars with trade; behind its alleged theoretical principles they sensed the bourgeois they detested with his unmanly cowardice and indecisiveness, his penny-pinching, narrow-mindedness, and selfishness.[522] Bourgeois trader pacifism and bourgeois individualism incidentally belong necessarily together: where the welfare of the individual is considered the supreme law, there one must also assert that the development of the species must be halted to secure the welfare of the individuals, that thus e.g. no war may be waged "in which individuals perish anyway".[523] This individualistic-pacifist attitude, however, can hardly withstand the real test of a war;[524] only on the basis of a "prejudice" arising from the "uncritical confusion of modern with ancient social conditions" could one think that industry and trade destroy the warlike character of a people.[525]

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[518] *Zur Urgeschichte der Deutschen*, MEW, 19, 446.
[519] Engels, *What is to become of Turkey in Europe?*, New York Daily Tribune (NYDT) 21. 4. 1853 = CW, 12, 34.
[520] Marx-Engels, *That Bore of a War*, NYDT 17. 8. 1854 = CW, 13, 338.
[521] Marx, *Another British Revelation*, NYDT 24. 9. 1855 = CW, 14, 516.
[522] See the inimitable portrait of Cobden in Marx, *The Turkish Question in the Commons*, NYDT 2. 9. 1853 = CW, 12, 274 f. Cf. Marx, *Prospect in France and England*, NYDT 24. 4. 1855 = CW, 14, 143: "...as soon as the effects of the war should become taxable upon their pockets, mercantile sense was sure to overcome national pride, and the loss of immediate individual profits was sure to outweigh the certainty of losing, gradually, great national advantages".
[523] Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, MEW, 26 (2), 111.
[524] Engels, *England*, I (23. 1. 1852) = MEW, 8, 215.
[525] Marx, *Zu der Angelegenheit in der Krim*, Neue Oder-Zeitung 18. 9. 1855 = MEW, 11, 536.

Given this assessment of the historical functions of war and of bourgeois pacifism, Marx and Engels could not belong to those who demand a taming of the military by the civil government because they promise themselves an avoidance or at least a limitation of war from it. In their eyes—and they are not mistaken in this—wars have much deeper causes than the warmongering of hotheads in uniform; they therefore waste few words on this question. Although they are not to be suspected of a militaristic disposition in any sense, they nevertheless do not hesitate to plead for the autonomy of the military in the conduct of war operations if they expect a politically desirable intensification of the war from militarily consistent warfare. At the time of the Crimean War, when they considered the creation of a revolutionary situation through a European war possible, they welcomed the failure of diplomatic mediation actions and the recourse to arms as "a stage where diplomacy will not much longer be able to monopolize the ground for its ever-shifting, ever-cowardly, and ever-resultless movements".[526] If, however, the Crimean War initially nullified diplomatic machinations, diplomatic activity for its part never ceased its striving after its outbreak to keep it and the energies released by it within limits.[527] Marx and Engels lament this dilution of the war by the effect of the diplomatic backdrop; they find that the operations on both sides turn out highly unsatisfactory from a military-scientific point of view because they allow themselves to be guided more by political-diplomatic than by strategic considerations,[528] and they ask themselves in each case to what extent the military actions drag on for immanent or for diplomatic reasons, to what extent the generals who appear as main actors outwardly are initiated into the plans of their governments, and finally to what extent diplomacy loses influence on the commanders "as soon as they find themselves in a mousetrap".[529] According to Engels' conviction, a warfare that does not direct itself according to military viewpoints can only have disastrous effects: "the chief who is influenced by political considerations or who acts with a want of resolution must lose his army".[530] Accordingly, he wanted to let the following principles prevail in his war reporting: "There is only one correct political line in war: to proceed with the greatest speed and energy to beat the opponent and force him to submit to the conditions of the victor. If the allied governments do this, I will acknowledge it; if they tie their commanders' hands or gag them, I will speak out against it... Moreover, I will adhere to the

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[526] Engels, *The European War*, NYDT 2. 2. 1854 = CW, 12, 553; Marx, *The War in the East*, Zuid Afrikaan 6. 3. 1854 = CW, 12, 568.

[527] Engels, *The Last Battle in Europe*, NYDT 8. 2. 1854 = CW, 12, 582.

[528] Engels, *Retreat of the Russians from Kalafat*, The People's Paper 18. 3. 1854 = CW, 13, 67; Engels, *The Siege of Silistria*, NYDT 26. 6. 1854 = CW, 13, 234; Marx-Engels, *That Bore of a War*, NYDT 17. 8. 1854 = CW, 13, 336.

[529] See the letter from Marx to Engels dated Oct. 10, 1854 = MEW, 28, 395.

[530] *The European War*, NYDT 17. 2. 1855 = CW, 13, 613.

principle that military science, just like mathematics and geography, has no particular political opinion".[531]

In doing so, Marx and Engels were quite capable of distinguishing between strictly military and political-diplomatic viewpoints and, if it appeared expedient, demanding the subjection of the former to the latter. This ability of theirs was proven in at least two cases in which their position was confirmed by long-term development. When Engels in 1859 advocated the abandonment of Lombardy by Austria and examined the Italian question from an all-German perspective, he first explained the military reasons why this abandonment need not entail an additional threat to Germany by France. To the German troops, he opined, more geographical possibilities offered themselves than to the French ones if they wanted to penetrate into Italy, also the river lines were more favorable to them and even the Mincio line was indispensable only for Austria, not for Germany as a whole.[532] To these military considerations he then added the following political considerations, which he considered decisive: "As long as we keep Lombardy, Italy is necessarily the ally of France in every French war against Germany. As soon as we give it up, that ceases. But is it in our interest to keep four fortresses and in return secure for ourselves the fanatical enmity and for the French the alliance of 25 million Italians?"[533] With similar foresight Marx and Engels argued when they turned against the annexation policy after the war of 1870/71, and here too the keeping apart of military and political-diplomatic viewpoints served as the starting point for their assessment of the new situation. "Militarily," they thought, the annexations meant a great strategic advantage insofar as Germany obtained a defensive front of immense strength through Metz and Strasbourg. The political consequences of the annexation, however, outweighed these strategic advantages by far: now not only had a reconciliation between Germany and France become impossible, but also an alliance between France and Russia unavoidable, whereby Germany had to be driven into a corner.[534]

Through these introductory remarks we have hopefully gained a perspective within which the statements of the two founders of historical materialism on war can be understood and evaluated beyond or on this side of historical-theoretical dogmatics and historical-philosophical eschatology. It would be a mistake, however, to think that what is valuable in them had nothing to do with the specifically Marxist theory of history, but was merely to be ascribed to a healthy common sense or a brilliant insight into the nature of the case. Of that there was certainly no lack in Marx and Engels, and yet their questionings always revolve directly or indirectly around certain leitmotifs that have historical-theoretical relevance, i.e., are intended to form building

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[531] Letter to H.-S. Lincoln dated Mar. 30, 1854 = MEW, 28, 602. Cf. Excursus A, Note 29.
[532] *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, esp. 235, 238, 245, 249.
[533] *Ibid.*, 251.
[534] Engels, *Die Rolle der Gewalt*..., MEW, 21, 446. Cf. already the letter from Marx and Engels to the Committee of the Social Democratic Workers' Party (1870), MEW, 17, 268.

blocks of historical materialism. It is true that these building blocks sometimes do not harmonize with one another if one applies the logical yardstick strictly. Not merely the limits of knowledge and also not merely the biases and one-sidednesses of the great theorists, but just as much the immense diversity and contradictoriness of the human make such discrepancies usually unavoidable in every great design; the following analysis aims to show that Marx and Engels grasped at least an important part of this diversity and mastered it conceptually in a positively and negatively instructive way.

2. War, Economy and Society

On the highest level of historical-theoretical abstraction, where only one-dimensional explanations corresponding to the dogmatic intention may apply, war constitutes for Marx and Engels, as is well known, an acute form of those conflicts which are essentially connected with class society. The fundamental thesis: "all collisions of history have... their origin in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse"[535] can be reversed, and then it means that every society in which a contradiction between productive forces and form of intercourse prevails, i.e., every society split into antagonistic classes, must generate collisions from its womb. A variety of factors, toward which Marx and Engels always showed themselves open-minded, causes these collisions to assume the most diverse forms and reach the most diverse degrees of intensity, but this changes nothing in the conviction that all would originate in the last instance from the mentioned basic contradiction. This conviction, however, has an important implication: the common origin of the collisions conditions the commonality of their essence and character, all belong structurally and functionally together and are embedded in the same historical stream. Quite independently of the correctness of the etiology of collisions proposed here, the great methodological advantage of this view lies in the fact that it automatically poses the question of the structural and causal relationship of domestic and foreign policy, of war and revolution or civil war—which may count as a truism today, but became one not least thanks to the work of Marx and Engels. Mindful of this common origin and character of social-historical collisions, which overturns the common separations between Inside and Outside, nation and international society, Marx and Engels frequently use the term "war" not to designate an armed conflict between states, but the extreme intensity of a conflict in general, regardless of whether it takes place between states or within one and the same state. The "class conflict within the existing society" is indeed also called "civil war",[536] but not infrequently it is called "war" simply, especially when its last and decisive intensification is thought of. Thus Engels expects the "outbreak of the quite open, direct war of the poor against the rich" and predicts this war will be the bloodiest that has ever been waged.[537] And Marx, who likewise uses this phrasing,[538] speaks in the same breath of "the terrible wars which are preparing between the different classes of a nation, between the nations",[539] whereby he alludes precisely to the mentioned essential belonging together of the collisions of class society(ies) on all levels. "War" here is obviously a collective application of armed violence intended to serve

[535] *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 73.
[536] See e.g. *Manifest der Komm. Partei*, I = MEW, 4, 473.
[537] *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klassen*..., MEW, 2, 505, 504; cf. 441 on the strike as "war school of the workers".
[538] See e.g. Letter to the Labour Parliament, The People's Paper 18. 3. 1854 = CW, 13, 57: "...the war between the two classes that constitute modern society".
[539] Letter to Annenkov dated Dec. 28, 1846, MEW, 4, 455.

the achievement of collective purposes, whereby the affected collectives can just as well be classes or nations or states. The use of the concept "war" thus refers particularly to the aspect of unavoidable armed use of violence and at the same time the extreme sharpening of the struggle, an aspect which could possibly not be brought fully into consciousness even by words like "revolution": for "peaceful revolutions" have existed or at least people have spoken of them, but "peaceful wars" occur neither in reality nor in language.

The connection of the derivation of wars from class antagonisms with the eschatological component in the thought of Marx and Engels is obvious. If wars originate, and be it only in the last instance, from class antagonisms or from the contradictions between productive forces and form of intercourse, then they must disappear from history as soon as those antagonisms and these contradictions are abolished; were wars not traceable only to that, the paradox of their continuation in a classless international society would arise. The connection of Marxian etiology of wars and eschatological expectation is, of course, logically not compelling insofar as it can be assumed that wars indeed are grounded in class antagonisms, yet these will remain insurmountable for all times and therefore wars too will remain a permanent phenomenon in human history. In the thought of Marx and Engels, in any case, this gloomy possibility is out of the question; classes and wars are equally predestined for the dustbin of history. Precisely because of this their community of fate, it seems so strange that conflicts which Marx and Engels explicitly label with the name "war" admittedly existed even before the formation of a class society: "war was as old as the simultaneous existence of several community groups side by side,"[540] and already tribes living still in gentile constitution were weakened by "eternal wars".[541] One has wanted to see an internal contradiction of the materialist conception of history in this assumption of wars between classless communities,[542] and therefore it is advisable to go into the reasons why that which *prima vista* is indeed a blatant contradiction could not be felt as such by Marx and Engels.

The wars of classless tribes against one another differ first of all from those between class societies by two characteristics. First, they were waged by the whole tribe, by the "population organizing itself as an armed power",[543] they thus did not constitute the task of a group trained for it within the framework of a society that knows (developed) division of labor and class separation, and therefore the conflict of interests between classes was not reflected in their conduct or in the decision for them. For there was precisely at this time, where every adult male tribe member was a warrior, no "public power separated from the people" yet, the army leaders

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[540] Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 167.
[541] Engels, *Ursprung der Familie...*, MEW, 21, 93.
[542] Wette, *Kriegstheorien*, 40 ff.; Gallie, *Philosophers*, 76 ff.
[543] Engels, *Ursprung der Familie...*, MEW, 21, 165.

were chosen regardless of descent "merely according to ability," they had little power and had to work by example, while the "real power" lay with the popular assembly or the tribal council, which decided on war and peace, although individual outstanding warriors occasionally undertook warlike expeditions on their own account.[544] Second, no exploitation intention underlay these wars, if by that is meant that they were waged for the acquisition of goods or labor forces which benefited (primarily) a ruling stratum within the warring tribe; since the absence of classes went hand in hand with the underdevelopment of the division of labor as well as with autarky in labor forces and products, war also could not be waged for exploitation purposes in the class sense. Slaves were not yet needed, the subjugation of foreign tribes was therefore superfluous and the war could end with the annihilation of the tribe, but never with its subjugation; usually the defeated were driven from their territory. It was the grandeur, but also the limitation of the gentile constitution that it had "no room for rule and servitude".[545]

Nevertheless, the causes of these wars remained fundamentally economic. Among pastoral peoples the tribe regarded "a certain region as its hunting ground and asserted it violently against other tribes, or sought to drive other tribes out of the one asserted by them." And similarly with already settled tribes: "The only barrier the community can find in its relation to the natural conditions of production—the earth—is another community, which already claims them... War is therefore one of the most original labors of each of these naturally grown communities, both for the assertion of property and for the new acquisition of the same".[546] Economic was also ultimately the reason why there were separate and self-contained, (relatively) small tribes at all, which had to war against each other. The scarcity of goods, i.e., the underdeveloped division of labor and the low labor productivity placed insurmountable obstacles in the way of the formation of a broader intercourse and extensive collectives, and accordingly social life had to unfold within the fixed boundaries of the tribe, whose preservation was therefore vital and made a more or less sharp demarcation against other tribes unavoidable: "What was outside the tribe was outside the law. Where no express peace treaty existed, war reigned from tribe to tribe".[547] But precisely this constellation, in which economic conditions confined social life into small classless tribes and simultaneously drove the tribes to endless wars against each other, was unimaginable with regard to the classless society of the future, which after all was to be erected on the basis of a final overcoming of goods scarcity and simultaneously on the basis of the world market already created by capitalism. The causes that generated war in primitive classlessness would thus fall away in future classlessness. Therefore

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[544] *Ibid.*, 103, 138, 92.
[545] *Ibid.*, 96, 152.
[546] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 390, 390 f. Similarly Engels, *ibid.*, 159 f.: wars were only waged for revenge for encroachments or for the extension of territory that had become insufficient".
[547] Engels, *ibid.*, 97, cf. 92.

Marx and Engels felt by no means concerned about the peacefulness of the developed communist society when they noted the existence, indeed the central importance of war in the life of primitive classless societies. In this respect, the mentioned theoretical difficulty could be overcome for the time being, but not so simply could some aspects be subsumed under this thought schema which, although brought up only incidentally, nevertheless raised fundamental questions. Thus Engels described those tribal conflicts as follows: "war was waged with the cruelty that distinguishes man from the other animals and which was only later mitigated by interest".[548] This "interest," which dominated "civilized class society" from the beginning, now awakened feelings like "base greed, brutal lust for enjoyment, sordid avarice," which were perhaps not nobler, yet different and more complicated than the naked cruelty which they are supposed to have found and subsequently mitigated. It is not evident, however, why the succession and conditioning of socially prevailing feelings must be explained in this way, why thus a cruelty which obviously is there without any doing of a class society and even exceeds that of the other animals, must not be understood as that constant magnitude which, although experiencing many modifications under the influence of social development (hence the optical illusion it would be influenced and mitigated by interest as if from outside), nevertheless asserts itself in its substance as power claim (or will to existence under the conditions of competition from Inside and Outside) and supports the relations of domination anthropologically.[549] We will have to return to this in the discussion of Engels' critique of Dühring's theories.

Marx and Engels did not fail to recognize that the incessant waging of wars between classless societies could not remain without consequences for their internal structure. According to their view, the relations of domination and servitude arose "in a twofold way," namely on the one hand through the emergence of slavery as a result of advancing division of labor and production growth with simultaneous disintegration of common ownership of land, and on the other hand through the gradual autonomization of serving organs of society vis-à-vis this same society. This autonomization occurred in turn partly through the "hereditary nature of office holding, occurring almost self-evidently in a world where everything happens naturally," partly through its "indispensability growing with the increase of conflicts with other groups".[550] If a

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[548] *Ibid.*, 97.

[549] The following passage gives rise to the same aporia or reversal of priorities: "Darwin's work is very significant and suits me as a natural-scientific basis for the historical class struggle". When Marx wrote this (letter to Lassalle dated Jan. 16, 1861 = MEW, 30, 678), he overlooked the fact that the basis he mentioned is something natural and immutable, whereas the class struggle must cease one day with historical necessity. Moreover, it is not certain that only the class struggle in society should correspond to the struggle for existence in nature: if the latter is a constant of nature, it will have to take place even without classes, e.g. on the level of direct existential confrontation between humans, who may group themselves accordingly, but not according to criteria of class affiliation.

[550] Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 167, 166.

community is in a more or less permanent state of war, those of its members must gain in social weight who are by nature most gifted and capable of waging war effectively or leading successfully in war. This is initially service to the community, for its own execution however this service requires a certain independence in action, which is institutionalized step by step with frequent occurrence of emergencies. Historically and sociologically important here is the observation that rule, quite independently of its class content and of the profit it brings its bearer, can neither arise nor exist for a longer time if it does not fulfill certain functions that are actually of public utility, i.e., serve the self-assertion of the given collective in the struggle against nature or against other collectives.[551] Service and rule mixed from the beginning in the army leaders of the classless tribes, and the indispensability of the service only strengthened the feeling of rule and the claim to it. Sometimes these army leaders brought it to tyranny, and although they were by no means yet unlimited rulers, they nevertheless already began to break the fetters of the gentile constitution. The retinues of the German tribes, which already appeared in peacetime as a solid core around which the other volunteers grouped in case of war, formed "the core of the decay of the old popular freedom," as showed during and after the migration of peoples. For they favored the rise of royal power and hereditary nobility, and they could only be held together by ever new predatory wars, which for their part further consolidated the power of the army leaders.[552]

The dissolving effect of war on the social relations of (smaller) communities was also noted by Marx, who of course was thinking no longer of the primitive classless, but of the ancient Greek-Roman type community. The basis of this form of socialization is not the land, but the city as "already created seat of the rural people," i.e., the landowners; the field appears here as territory of the city. The difficulties of this community stem not from the nature of the earth, but from other communities which have already occupied the land in question or claim it for themselves. "War is therefore the great common task, the great communal work, be it to occupy the objective conditions of living existence or be it to protect the occupation of the same. The community consisting of families therefore organized in a warlike manner as a war and army system, and this one of the conditions of its existence as owner. The concentration of residences in the city basis of this warlike organization".[553] War system and conquest belong here

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[551] Engels writes in this sense that political rule was everywhere based on a social function; and political rule has only lasted for any length of time when it fulfilled this its social function" (*ibid.*, 167). He then cites the example of oriental despotisms, each of which knew perfectly well that it was above all the general entrepreneur for the irrigation of the river valleys", and thinks that the fulfillment of such a function makes rule "legitimate" in a certain sense. With regard to interstate conflicts, Marx expressed the view that a ruling class which cannot defend the position of its own nation in the world must eventually abdicate (letter to Engels dated Mar. 10, 1853, MEW, 28, 223).

[552] Engels, *Der Ursprung der Familie...*, MEW, 21, 92, 139, 146 f., 160.

[553] *Grundrisse*, 378.

essentially to the "economic conditions of the community itself" and yet they abolish the "real bond on which it rests." For with such forms of economizing a certain and unalterable relationship of the individual to the "objective existence of the community, i.e., both in behavior to the conditions of labor, as to his co-workers, tribal fellows etc.," is presupposed, a relationship which is reproduced in economic reproduction itself. Only a minimal expansion of reproduction is compatible with the character of this community, whereas any lifting of the barrier represents decay and downfall. Conquest effects here the same as e.g. the development of slavery, the concentration of land ownership, exchange or the money system; it belongs to the elements that "seemed compatible with the foundation up to a certain point and seemed partly only to extend it innocently," but in reality contribute to the individual changing his relationship to the community: "so he changes with it and acts destructively on the community; as on its economic presupposition."[554] For it is a question here of a reproduction which is "at the same time necessarily new production and destruction of the old form." "For example where each of the individuals is supposed to possess so and so many acres of land, the progress of population is already in the way. If this is to be remedied, then colonization, and this necessitates war of conquest. With it slaves etc. Thus the preservation of the old community implies the destruction of the conditions on which it rests, turns into the opposite".[555]

We mentioned that Engels, in his description of the double origin of relations of domination and servitude, distinguished the emergence of slavery from the process of autonomization of the serving organs of society not least because of the necessity of continuous waging of wars, and traced it back to economic causes in the narrower sense, i.e., to the progress of production and division of labor. Now one cannot, if one wants to be precise, explain slavery as an already completed and functioning form of ruling and economizing by these economic causes, but only the endogenous reason that had to drive toward its formation. The development of production and division of labor could in itself only make new needs visible, but it was not able to satisfy these needs out of its own dynamics. For this, war was again indispensable, for only through it could the henceforth required labor forces be procured. Also before the emergence of the mentioned needs war had, as we know, an economic function, since it was waged for the defense or acquisition of economic living space. This function, however, did not constitute the answer to an internal differentiation of the community, but it was geared toward the defensive or offensive preservation of the same quantity of living space for the reproduction of the same social quality. The new needs now had to bring about a change in the function of war, and the new mode of production arises and shapes itself through this crossing of economic needs and warlike activity in changed function. While in the wars of barbarian-classless communities against each other prisoners were killed because "no room for subjugation" was there, prisoners

[554] *Ibid.*, 386.
[555] *Ibid.*, 393.

of war are now transformed into slaves and thus supply the needed labor forces.[556] These labor forces, however, do not belong, or not entirely, to the entire community for collective satisfaction of collective needs or for collective and equal exploitation, but they represent (primarily) the property of a class increasingly delimiting itself against the community; thus the change in function of the war is conditioned not merely and generally by the new economic needs, but (at least in the long run) equally by the existence and character of the just emerging ruling class. With the use of slaves, wealth as such is discovered at all, and accordingly the war goals now look: war becomes a standing branch of acquisition and "regular source of acquisition," systematic robbery on land and sea to conquer cattle, slaves, treasures".[557]

Even if one thus notes the endogenous economic pressures for the use of slave labor and allows them full validity, this changes nothing in the fact that without war slave labor would not have been procurable, that thus slavery as a form of class rule could not have come about. That war played possibly a greater role here than that which Engels accorded it must be assumed if one asks oneself why the inflowing slave labor was not exploited collectively by the community, but benefited (primarily) a few. Here a preceding internal differentiation process of the community is to be surmised, which however, for lack of the later class-based differentiation, had to go back at least in part to war merits. This, of course, does not yet refute the assertion that the use of slave labor became necessary precisely because of the new economic needs. These needs, however, were satisfied only among the already socially—not yet economically—stronger ones, who thereby simultaneously became pioneers and representatives of the more developed mode of production. Accordingly, it appears as more probable that war leaders, who already as such enjoyed social eminence, used their war successes for the capture of slaves, who represented so to speak a personal war bonus and were intended to free the concerned war leaders or their people from current work in peacetime. This process too stood, however, under the economic presupposition that the war leader was able to feed his own slaves, but this could be ensured not only by a household with already somewhat developed productivity and division of labor, but also simply by robbery and still more robbery, which incidentally continued also when the work of the slaves could feed them and their masters. The autonomization of the organs of the community or of the war leaders and the pursuit of new war goals, as they resulted from the described change in function of the war, flowed indeed into one and the same process, the end point of this process however, namely the emergence of slavery as a mode of production, could be reached in at least two ways, i.e., either by robbery of slaves because they were needed, or by creation of a slave economy because slaves were available. That hints also a formulation by Marx: "In the slave the instrument of production is directly robbed. But then the production of the country for which he is robbed must be so structured to admit slave labor, or (as in South

[556] Engels, *Der Ursprung der Familie...*, MEW, 21, 58, 157.
[557] *Ibid.*, 159 f., 105.

America etc.) a mode of production corresponding to the slave must be created".[558] In another place the emergence of slavery and serfdom is even traced back exclusively to conquest: "If the human being himself is conquered as organic accessory of the land along with it, then he is conquered along as one of the conditions of production, and thus arises slavery and serfdom, which soon falsifies and modifies the original forms of all communities, and becomes itself their basis".[559] The assumption of the emergence of slavery through conquest seems here to be a necessary logical conclusion from the insight into the collective character of property within a classless community: if property is tribal property and the individual becomes an owner only by virtue of his property as a member of the tribe, then the conquest of tribal property must simultaneously effect the conquest of the owners connected with it and the transformation of the same into mere property of the conqueror; from conquered tribal property, therefore, nothing else but slavery or serfdom can emerge, and indeed regardless of the internal socio-economic constitution of the conqueror: "The basic condition of property resting on the tribal system...—to be a member of the tribe—makes the foreign tribe conquered by the tribe, the subjugated one, propertyless and throws it itself under the inorganic conditions of its reproduction... Slavery and serfdom are therefore only further developments of property resting on the tribal system. They modify necessarily all forms of the same".[560]

Marx and Engels could already early on concede a substantial socio-historical effect to the war factor and at the same time take the field against those who would have made "violence, war, pillage, robbery-murder etc. the driving force of history,"[561] without having the feeling that they were contradicting themselves. Their theoretical conscience was so calm because they simply regarded war as part or aspect of economizing, of socially necessary and socially performed "labor": "With the conquering barbarian people war itself is still... a regular form of intercourse, which is exploited all the more eagerly, the more the increase of population creates the need for new means of production given the traditional and for it only possible crude mode of production".[562] Form or continuation of economic intercourse with violent means, however, war can be just as well among highly civilized peoples, as the trade wars from the 16th-18th century show, of which we will still speak. In every concrete case it must anyway be investigated on which socio-economic development level the belligerents or conquerors and conquered are located. If both sides stand more or less on the same level, like the primitive classless communities, then it is to be assumed that the outcome of their war against each other will not

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[558] *Grundrisse*, 19.
[559] *Ibid.*, 391.
[560] *Ibid.*, 392.
[561] *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 23.
[562] *Ibid.* On war as work see above note 37; on the population factor see Marx, *Erzwungene Emigration*, NYDT 22. 3. 1853 = MEW, 8, 543, as well as *Grundrisse*, 498.

substantially change their socio-economic structure, although, as already noted, the long-term dissolving effects of warfare itself do not fail to appear. If, on the other hand, unequally developed collectives come into conflict, then different consequences are to be expected from the outcome of the war in each case, depending on whether the victor or the defeated or the conqueror or the conquered is the most advanced and how long the conquest lasts. "Irruptions of barbarian peoples" and even "ordinary wars" suffice to bring a country with developed productive forces and needs to the point "where it must start all over again," or at any rate they cause destructions that can be repaired only after a long time; thus e.g. the loss of the inventions of the Phoenicians through Alexander's conquest.[563] The Thirty Years' War "destroyed the most significant part of the productive forces applied in agriculture" and has been an important reason for Germany's backwardness compared to other European countries.[564] Cruder conquerors sometimes devastate the existing productive forces or let them decay, as e.g. the Christians in Moorish Spain did with the greater part of the irrigation works, because they simply did not know what to do with them.[565] War has an all the more destructive effect, the more production relies on a single factor; thus in the Orient, where everything depended on the artificial fertilization of the soil, a single war of devastation could depopulate a country for centuries and strip it of its entire civilization.[566]

The fundamental conviction of Marx and Engels that the higher mode of production will eventually gain the upper hand is reflected in their emphatic indication that in the immense majority of cases of permanent conquests the cruder conqueror must adapt to the "higher economic situation" as it emerges from the conquest.[567] Accordingly, they are less interested in cases in which conquest signifies by and large a regression, and much more in those in which the conqueror appears as bearer of a superior civilization and cleans up the socio-economic backwardness of the conquered. Mention is made, of course, of the spread of culture linked with the Roman conquests,[568] but the main focus is directed to the wars of conquest of the modern era in their connection with the opening of the world market and with enormous social upheavals. In this phase of history and under these conditions a radical change in function of the war of conquest seems even to have occurred. While conquest formerly brought about

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[563] *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 54.

[564] Engels, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*, MEW, 7, 409; *Revolution und Konterrevolution in Deutschland*, MEW, 8, 8.

[565] Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 170.

[566] Brief von Engels an Marx vom 6. 6. 1853 = MEW, 28, 259.

[567] Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 170. Cf. Marx, *The Future Results of British Rule in India*, NYDT 8. 8. 1853 = CW, 12, 218: "...the barbarian conquerors being, by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superior civilization of their subjects."

[568] *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 24; cf. Engels, *Zur Urgeschichte der Deutschen*, MEW, 19, 441 (rise of towns and markets around the permanent camps of the Roman army and consolidation of foreign rule through peaceful intercourse).

brutal destruction of economic resources, from which "under circumstances... a whole economic local and national development could perish," it has opposite effects today, at least among the great peoples: "the defeated gains in the long run economically, politically and morally sometimes more than the victor".[569] In view of these objective historical achievements of (certain) modern wars of conquest, moral condemnations seem out of place. As Engels wrote on the occasion of the war of conquest of the USA against Mexico, one should leave sterile moralizing aside when a war is waged in the interest of civilization. "Or is it perhaps a misfortune that magnificent California has been torn from the lazy Mexicans, who did not know what to do with it? that the energetic Yankees by the rapid exploitation of the gold mines there increased the means of circulation, created cities, steamships and railways and will for the third time in history give world trade a new direction..."; "moral principles may be violated here and there; but what does that count against such world-historical facts?".[570] Similarly Marx argued about the moral aspect of the conquest of India by the British. What struck him about this same conquest from a historical and socio-economic view was the fact that all earlier conquerors of the huge country, Arabs, Mongols and Tartars, had submitted as representatives of a less developed social form to the culture of the conquered, whereas the Britains were "the first conqueros superior, and therefore inaccessible to Hindoo civilization."[571] This superiority of the conqueror produced a profound effect of the conquest, thus a change in function of conquest and war. As Marx opined, the "Asiatic form" of production, which rested on a "self-sustaining unity of manufacture and agriculture," was less exposed to the influences of war and conquest than the "Greek-Roman ancient form" with the predominance of agriculture in it.[572] War was also waged in despotic Asia, here however it formed only "plunder of the exterior," just as state finances were "plunder of the interior,"[573] and therefore it could change or rather confuse things only on the surface of society, into the depth it did not penetrate. Exactly this the British conquest has now achieved: it "has broken down the entire framework of Indian society".[574]

In an attempt to survey the socio-economic effects of conquest at once, Marx considered three cases "possible" and also historically documented: "The conquering people subjects the conquered to its own mode of production (e.g. the English in Ireland in this century, partly in India); or it leaves the old existing and satisfies itself with tribute (e.g. Turks and Romans); or a reciprocal interaction occurs, whereby something new arises, a synthesis (partly in the Germanic conquests). In all cases the mode of production, be it of the conquering people, be it of

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[569] Brief von Engels an C. Schmidt vom 27. 10. 1890 = MEW, 37, 491.
[570] *Der demokratische Panslawismus*, Neue Rhein. Zeitung 15. 2. 1849 = MEW, 6, 273 f.
[571] *The Future Results of British Rule in India*, NYDT 8. 8. 1853 = CW, 12, 218.
[572] *Grundrisse*, 392 f.; cf. above notes 38 & 39.
[573] *The British Rule in India*, NYDT 25. 6. 1853 = CW, 12, 127; the expression is taken from Engels' letter to Marx dated June 6, 1853, MEW, 28, 259.
[574] *The British Rule*, 126.

the conquered, be it the one emerging from the fusion of both, is determinant for the new distribution that occurs. Although this appears as prerequisite for the new production period, it is thus itself a product of production".[575] By distribution Marx understands here not the distribution of products, but another one which conditions the distribution of products and precedes it. It concerns the distribution a) of the instruments of production and b) of the members of society among the different kinds of production. As such this distribution determines the "structure of production," it forms a "subsumption of individuals under specific relations of production," it is thus included within the production process itself or a "moment of production," and production would appear as "empty abstraction" if one wanted to conceive it independently of this distribution.[576] Marx now trusts a "conquering people" with the power to undertake such a distribution, by e.g. distributing the land among its own members and thereby imposing a certain form of landed property and production or by enslaving the conquered and making slave labor the basis of production. Nevertheless, he does not want to allow that this distribution of production precedes as it were as an "ante-economic fact,"[577] and this can initially cause astonishment if one considers how extensive this concept of distribution is—as extensive actually as the concept of relations of production itself. What then can the conqueror not do, if he admittedly as conqueror can distribute the means of production and the people? First, as conqueror he cannot create new means of production *ex nihilo*, but he must undertake the distribution on the basis of those which are already there as historical result of a certain mode of production, regardless of whether on his side or on the side of the conquered. And second, he can distribute the people within production only according to the pattern which he brings with him or finds with the conquered (probably also on the basis of a mixture of both) and which likewise stems from a certain mode of production. In the light of these considerations Marx would not hesitate to assert the precedence of production over distribution even with regard to those cases in which an already formed social organization transplants itself through conquest or emigration into another country and thereby creates the impression of a creation *ex nihilo*, especially since it can unfold here more freely, i.e., without being exposed to the burdens of heterogeneous and obsolete elements, as happened perhaps in its first home. Thus Marx explains not only the rapid rise of capitalism in the USA, but already the completion of feudalism as a result of the Norman conquest in England or Naples; the "secondary form" has everywhere surpassed the original.[578]

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[575] *Grundrisse*, 18 f. Engels' impression that Ireland was "totally ruined" by the English wars of conquest 1100-1850 is not necessarily in contradiction with the assessment of Ireland's historical destinies contained in this passage, see letter to Marx dated May 23, 1856, MEW, 29, 57.
[576] *Grundrisse*, 17, 20.
[577] *Ibid.*, 17.
[578] *Ibid.*, 390; see already *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 75.

Here obviously a theory is present which can indeed explain a historical development shaped by war and conquest *ex post facto*, but cannot predict that war and conquest must intervene so that that socio-economic structure arises from which the explanation undertaken *ex post facto* has to proceed. A historical prognosis and thus also a theory of the necessary succession of stages of the historical process would only be possible if a development based on immanent factors came into question; war and conquest, however, make the course of history look much more open and broken—at least as long as the world market unifying the course of world history does not yet exist, as long as there is thus a genuine diversity of independently existing modes of production and forms of intercourse formed more or less independently within a own, (relatively) secluded living space. What results from war and conquest in socio-economic respect is possibly understandable on the basis of already existing or mutually transformed forms of production and relations, but no necessity fixed in advance conditions the encounter of conqueror and conquered on the, historically seen, respectively decisive terrain. Very frequently, however, it seems to be the case that precisely this encounter triggers the forward-driving energy, specifically in world-historically critical turning points or transition phases. Engels himself indicated the possibility of a historical vicious circle, in which the perpetual crisis of a mode of production or a social formation ends mainly through conquest. When he touched upon the contradiction between productive forces and relations in slavery, he did not speak of internal reasons that remove the barrier which developed production finds in slavery. He mentioned, to be sure, that slavery was occasionally "abolished" under purely economic pressure by force or voluntarily, but this concerned in his view only the fewest cases; as a rule, the solution came from outside, in a rather accidental time sequence and after several futile breakout attempts within the framework of the same socio-economic formation, which however finally led only to sterile repetitions: "Solution in most cases through violent enslavement of the deteriorating communities by other, stronger ones (Greece by Macedonia and later Rome); as long as these themselves rest on slavery, the center is only shifted and the process repeated on a higher level until (Rome) finally conquers a people that substitutes another form of production for slavery".[579]

The emergence of feudalism under the influence of the Germanic conquest forms from the result the model example of a combination of accidentally clashing factors formed with inner necessity. Marx and Engels do not engage in historical-theoretical thoughts about the fact of this encounter as such, but they concentrate on the constitution of the result, which they can then explain causally, although again the relative share of each factor in this process, thus the causality of the process itself, remains largely unclear. Their explanation reads: "Feudalism was by no means brought ready-made from Germany, but it had its origin on the part of the

[579] Vorarbeiten zum "*Anti-Dühring*", MEW, 20, 586.

conquerors in the warlike organization of the army system during the conquest itself, and this developed after the same through the action of the productive forces found in the conquered countries only into actual feudalism".[580] On the decisive level of agricultural production, the intertwinement is said to have been made possible or "easier" by the fact that the concentration of landed property already having taken place in the late Roman Empire fitted well with the "traditional" Germanic agriculture with serfs" and with the "isolated life on the land".[581] Since conquerors and conquered stood almost on the same "economic stage of development" (if we think here exclusively of agriculture) and therefore the conquest did not have to set in motion a change of the "economic basis of society," the conquerors could rescue certain aspects of their traditional gentile constitution into the new social organization, as e.g. in the form of the German Mark constitution with common possession of forest and pasture—on the other hand, however, they had to bid farewell to the traditional in two central points: they accepted private ownership of fields and meadows and at the same time allowed the state to emerge: "among the German conquerors of the Roman Empire the state springs directly from the conquest of large foreign territories, which the gentile constitution provides no means to rule".[582] If, however, the (final) autonomization of the former serving organs of the community is an effect of the conquest process itself, which precisely could not fail to appear for the completion and organization of the conquest, then a development or a phenomenon is present here that was unknown before the encounter of conqueror and conquered. Feudalism can thus not have arisen merely from the combination of elements that were already present on both sides before their clash, but something else had to be added that entered the scene only in the conquest process itself. Only in it did the earlier retinues become the stricter and disciplined military organization, which was now so firmly outlined that on the basis of its structure the distribution of landed property could be undertaken. Conquest and army develop here an own dynamics, they act creatively beyond the limits of what was available in socio-economic potential on the side of the conqueror as well as of the conquered originally, i.e., before their encounter. It sounds like a casual insight into this fact when Engels writes once that the feudal system was "in its very origin a military organization",[583] while Marx reminds of the development of landed property relations from "purely military subordination relations" in order to destroy the "illusion" of the allegedly purely personal relations in the feudal period and to emphasize

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[580] *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 64 f., similarly 24: "The conditions found and the mode of organization of the conquest determined by them developed feudal property under the influence of the Germanic military constitution".

[581] *Grundrisse*, 19.

[582] Engels, *Der Ursprung der Familie*, MEW, 21, 164; *Die Mark*, MEW, 19, 321. Unlike with the German conquerors, the state in Athens is said to have sprung directly from class antagonisms, whereas in Rome the gentile society formed an aristocracy amidst a rightless plebs.

[583] *Army*, CW, 18, 103.

instead their "material character".[584] Of the social and economic organization as image or as function of the military organization they have incidentally also spoken in other contexts,[585] and beyond that traced the formation of high feudalism back exclusively to the "continual internal and external wars, whose regular consequence was confiscation of land and soil and the ruin of the free peasants, who saw themselves forced to seek a patron";[586] "military service, which accelerated the ruin of the Roman plebeians so much, was also a main means by which Charlemagne promoted the transformation of free German peasants into serfs and bondsmen hot-house fashion".[587]

The discussion of the socio-economic effects of war and conquest touches already on the more general question of the positive or negative relationships between political or state power and economy. A relationship of these fundamental magnitudes typical for Marx and Engels is embodied by the trade and colonial wars of the early modern period, which played a significant role in the process of the emergence of capitalism. Typical appears here both the clear economic etiology and motivation[588] and the cooperation of state power and economically authoritative classes. The colonial system belongs just as much as the national debt or protectionist system to the methods of primitive accumulation; all these methods use state power, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hot-house the transformation process of the feudal into the capitalist mode of production and to shorten the transitions. "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power".[589] As is evident from the context, (state) force is called an economic power in this famous passage not because it can call a mode of production and a form of intercourse into life on its own, but rather because it is placed in the service of macroeconomic processes already in motion, in order to propel them forward in the sense of the immanent logic of economic development and simultaneously to shorten them temporally; force is here, as already noted, a continuation of economizing by other, bloody means, just as it was in the wars of primitive or ancient tribes against one another, although this

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[584] *Grundrisse*, 82.

[585] Thus Marx in his description of the clan system: "The division and subdivision of the land corresponded to the military functions of the single members of the clan. According to their military abilities they were entrusted with portions by the chief of the clan"; the clan was nothing but a "militarily organized family" (*Wahlen*..., NYDT 9. 2. 1853, MEW, 8, 501 f.) Engels characterized the Turkish and Russian "system of government" in turn as "military occupation, in which the civil and judicial hierarchy are organized in a military manner", and the people "have to pay for the whole" (*What is to become of Turkey in Europe?*, NYDT 21. 4. 1853 = CW, 12, 36).

[586] Engels, *Die Mark*, MEW, 19, 324 f.; *Der Ursprung der Familie*, MEW, 21, 147, 126.

[587] Marx, *Das Kapital*, I, MEW, 23, 755, note 211; vgl. III, MEW, 25, 612.

[588] "With manufacture the various nations entered into a competitive relationship, the struggle for trade, which was fought out in wars, protective duties and prohibitions... Trade has from now on a political significance", *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 56, cf. 58.

[589] Marx, *Das Kapital*, I, MEW, 23, 779.

time it fulfills its economic functions at a higher stage of history and in a much more complicated way. The activity of the East India Company illustrates this cooperation of economic factors and military conquest, which is concretized in the community of interest and collaboration of commercial, financial, and politico-military oligarchy.[590] Marx recalls that the conquest of Punjab and then the Asian wars had opened up hitherto unknown markets,[591] and explains the warlike desire of the "British mercantile classes" in 1857 by the expectation of "great commercial profits from a forcible opening of the Chinese market".[592] British readiness for war in the Asian colonial sphere increased, incidentally, to the extent that one could shift the financial burdens of the war, which evoked downright fear of an armed conflict in Europe, onto the shoulders of the natives.[593]

The other statements by Marx and Engels on the connections between war and economic objectives are sparse and cannot be generalized.[594] It remains recognizable, however, that the two theorists are far removed from the naive notion that every war has immediate economic motives without exception and is waged because those concerned promised themselves tangible economic profits from it. According to their view, it is rather the case that wars have economic reasons generally, if we mean by this that they necessarily take place in a milieu in which the political class and national antagonisms translate the more fundamental contradictions between mode of production and form of intercourse into another language. In this form, the theory remains of course little helpful when it comes to the explanation of the concrete case, which must be provided concretely. Engels nevertheless made an attempt to get a theoretical grip on the relationships between political force and economy and spoke of three conceivable cases in this "interaction of two unequal forces," as political force and economic development are. The first case we already encountered in the example of the trade and colonial wars: political force works into the hands of economic development, and "then it goes faster." But it can also—and this is the second case—work against it, "then nowadays in every great people it goes to ruin."

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[590] Marx, *The East India Company*, NYDT 11. 7. 1853 = CW, 12, 148 ff.
[591] *Population, Crime and Pauperism*, NYDT 16. 9. 1859 = CW, 16, 488 f.
[592] *The New Chinese War*, NYDT 18. 10. 1859 = CW, 16, 524.
[593] Marx, *War in Burma* etc., NYDT 30. 7. 1853 = CW, 12, 202.
[594] Marx referred without comment to Malthus' remark about large armies and costly wars as a means to create "an adequate demand" (*Theorien über den Mehrwert*, MEW, 26 (3), 45). Engels pointed to the "artificial boom" which British agriculture experienced during the Napoleonic wars, only to turn into a crisis after their end (*Die Lage*... MEW, 2, 473). But this meant no fundamental connection between war and economic prosperity. For Marx thought at the time of the Crimean War that it might dangerously aggravate the commercial crisis in Britain, although he did not believe that the war had caused the commercial crisis (*The Commercial Crisis in Britain*, NYDT 26. 1. 1855, CW, 13, 589). However, he had hoped that war or revolution would only break out as a result of an economic crisis: only if they had such deep social causes would they be able to shake up a Europe "enervated by the breath of prosperity" (*Revolution in China and in Europe*, NYDT 14. 6. 1853, CW, 12, 99).

Big industry thus reinforces the preponderance of the economic factor which exists anyway, and under the conditions of industrial society the pressure on political power to take into account the needs of the economy increases. Thirdly, political force can partly promote and partly inhibit economic development, but finally it must identify with the positive or negative role, and then we return to one of the first two cases. This all meant in plain text, of course, that the macroeconomic processes are authoritative and irreversible, and the examples mentioned by Engels subsequently of a reaction of the political upon the economic modified this fundamental position hardly at all. Thus he referred to Marx's known analysis of Bonapartism and the "special role" which political struggles and events played here—but, as he added, "of course within their general dependence on economic conditions". And furthermore he opined, with reference to Marx's remark about force or state power as an economic power, that the struggle for the political dictatorship of the proletariat is waged not least for the purpose of reshaping the economy. But precisely here it becomes visible how much his thinking remained bound to the first, typical case. For according to his understanding, the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be erected on the basis of a society that had perished from the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production, thus was no longer capable of ensuring the further unfolding of the economy;[595] this could only be guaranteed by the introduction of a new form of intercourse, and here the political power of the proletariat would serve economic development in roughly the same positive way as state power had done at the time of primitive capitalist accumulation.

In his polemic against Dühring, Engels underlined even more emphatically the case typical for him, in which force or state power or war is partly product and partly executive organ of the immanent logic of economic development. In this fundamental investigation of the problem, it is by no means a transition from an earlier, rather activist standpoint to a rigid deterministic view, as has been assumed,[596] if only for the simple reason that the theses set out in 1878—as will be shown immediately—had largely been formulated in much older writings by Marx and Engels. Rather, we are dealing here with a programmatic declaration which appeared indispensable for the dogmatic self-understanding of the theory, although it could not exhaust its scope and possible modifications or refinements. In itself, Engels was ready even after writing the polemic against Dühring to stand up for the due observance of the factor "force," and in the works of Maurer, otherwise highly esteemed by him, he criticized precisely the fact that errors and contradictions would result from "far too little consideration of force and its role".[597] The emphasis had to shift understandably, however, when it came to priorities on the highest, i.e., most abstract theoretical level. The aim of the argumentation on this level is indeed

[595] Brief an C. Schmidt vom 27. 10. 1890, MEW, 37, 493; Vgl. *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 170.
[596] S. z. B. Semmel, *Marxism*, 8 ff.
[597] Letter an Marx vom 15. 12. 1882, MEW, 35, 128.

clear, but its threads intertwine and different aspects of the problem are mixed with one another; to illuminate the matter better, it is therefore advisable to keep five viewpoints apart.

Let us begin with the viewpoint of the *economic motivation of force*. For Engels it is inconceivable that force could be exercised for its own sake; it can only be a means, whereas the purpose is economic advantage, and the more fundamental character of the economic side of the relationship of subjugation compared to its "political" side is supposed to be proven by the fact that subjugation was "always" a means for economic exploitation, but "never and nowhere" a political grouping introduced for its own sake.[598] In fact: if it is excluded from the outset that force can be an end in itself, it seems indicated already for methodological reasons to pose the question of its motivation and to look for a further-leading explanatory perspective, for a final reference point: "If force [is] the cause of social and political conditions, what then [is] the cause of force? The appropriation of foreign labor products and foreign labor power".[599] But force is denied not only the character of an end in itself, but also (and in connection with it) the ability to found and sustain permanent political groupings, i.e., a mode of production and the corresponding relations of production; just as in the realm of purposes it succumbs to a higher purpose and serves it as a means, so too in the realm of society-forming factors it succumbs to a stronger factor by which it is conditioned. So we pass to the second viewpoint, the viewpoint of the *economic determination of the mode of exercise of force*, which states: "Force could change the consumption of products, but not the mode of production itself".[600] Still more: force must adapt to the given mode of production in order to be able to undertake a long-term consumption of products at all. Here Engels links up with much older trains of thought from the time of the first elaboration of the materialist conception of history. Already then it was said that taking is conditioned by the object that is taken. A fortune consisting of paper or industrial capital cannot be taken without the taker subjecting himself to the conditions of production and intercourse of the taken country. Likewise the entire industrial capital of a modern industrial country—"and finally, taking has an end everywhere very soon and, when there is nothing more to take, one must begin to produce".[601] This thought was repeated a few times with emphasis[602] and leads for obvious reasons back to the problem of conquest discussed above.

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[598] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 148 f.
[599] *Op. cit.*, (Vorarbeiten), 588..
[600] *Op. cit.*
[601] *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3, 64.
[602] *Grundrisse*, 19: "But in order to plunder, there must be something to plunder, hence production. And the mode of plunder is itself in turn determined by the mode of production. A stock-jobbing nation, for example, cannot be robbed in the same way as a nation of cowherds". Similarly in the polemic against Bastiat, *Das Kapital*, I, MEW, 23, 96 note 33.

The third viewpoint concerns the *economic preconditions of (successful) exercise of force*. Already in the state of barbarism force could be exercised for collective purposes only with the help of weapons specially produced for it, and this dependence on the respective available means grew with the progress of civilization, to become practically absolute with the entry into the industrial age. Engels emphasizes therefore that "force is no mere act of will, but requires very real preconditions for its operation, namely tools, of which the more perfect overcomes the less perfect; that furthermore these tools must be produced... that the victory of force rests on the production of weapons, and this again on production in general, therefore on 'economic power', on the 'economic situation', on the material means available to force".[603] It must be added that the economic superiority which can secure success in war must not be understood in the narrow sense of the technical skills and equipment necessary for weapons production, but must rest on the entire economic potential; the level and mass of weapons production represents only the most conspicuous expression of all immanent possibilities of the mentioned potential, to which financial and material means of all kinds belong; Engels recalls that Athens' power over its allies failed due to the lack of means "to wage long and vigorous wars," or that the English subsidies, created by the new big industry, defeated Napoleon.[604] Now, however, not only the available weapons and resources in war depend on the mode of production and the economic situation of a country, but also the manner of their use. Thus we come to the fourth viewpoint, which concerns the *economic determination of the organization of force*. The organs through which force is exercised, i.e., the branches of the armed forces, must be structured and led according to such tactical and strategic principles as the respective developmental stage of weapons production, i.e., of production in general, dictates. Organization of the armed forces, tactics, and strategy are anything but arbitrary or accidental inventions, quite the contrary, the influence of genius commanders is limited in the best case to adapting the mode of combat to the new weapons and fighters.[605] Exactly the same view Marx had represented almost thirty years earlier when he used the example of weapons-technical development to prove his theory of the determination of social relations, in which producers enter into relation with one another, by the means of production: "With the invention of a new instrument of war, the firearm, the whole internal organization of the army necessarily changed, the relationships within which individuals form an army and can act as an army transformed, and the relationship of different armies to one another also changed".[606] He evidently remembered this passage when he asked the rhetorical question in 1866: "Our theory of the determination of labor organization by the means of production, does it prove itself anywhere more brilliantly than in the human slaughter

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[603] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 154.
[604] *Op. cit.*, (Vorarbeiten), 586.
[605] *Op. cit.*, 155.
[606] *Lohnarbeit und Kapital*, MEW, 6, 408.

industry?".[607] Engels kept this whole scale of thought before his eyes, and accordingly he pointed to the revolutionary effect of firearms not only on warfare itself but also on political relations of domination and servitude, insofar as their production and use solidified the alliance of town burghers and monarchy against the feudal nobility.[608] He also devoted plausible remarks to the influence of the change in weapons technology on tactics and strategy.[609]

The fifth viewpoint under which Engels considers the relationships between (political) force and economy is a *methodological* one. The analysis of the overall historical course by means of a guideline offered by the observation of (long-term) developments in the field of productive forces appears much more fruitful than an orientation on the phenomenon of political force. For this, Engels thinks, cannot explain the specific nature of a society because it has "always been the same" and was the common element of all previous forms of society. One must abstract from this common element, which cannot serve much as an explanatory ground, and seek the cause of the differentiation and change of a society in magnitudes that can differentiate and change themselves. Such magnitudes are precisely "the products and productive forces of the respective epoch", which in their developmental capacity can explain the different social and political forms,[610] while the abstractum "force" must behave neutrally towards historical diversity. The substantive thesis of the primacy of the mode of production is thus additionally supported by a methodological consideration, or rather the methodological viewpoint interlocks with the substantive principle of the theory.

It seems indeed very difficult to question the validity of the named viewpoints directly, i.e., to assert the exact opposite of them; at most they can be modified, relativized, supplemented, and placed in a more extensive framework of thought, but not refuted. Beyond any doubt stands first of all the finding of the economic preconditions of (successful) exercise of force, especially since the dawn of the industrial age, which has sharply distinguished the modes of production and possibilities of developed and underdeveloped nations from one another and at the same time directed the competition among the developed ones not least into the track of the economy; only nations that disposed of better weapons and greater economic potential have survived great or long wars, while the economically weaker one could only record rare and short-term successes. Equally indisputable is the causal connection between the progress of weapons technology and the changes in the field of strategy and tactics—here Marx and Engels have

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[607] Letter to Engels vom 7. 7. 1866, MEW, 31, 234.
[608] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 155.
[609] Cf. *Abschnitt* 5, S. 211 f.
[610] *Anti-Dühring* (Vorarbeiten), MEW, 20, 590.

first-rate experts of our century on their side.[611] And no less plausible appears the view that historical development cannot be explained by robbery and plunder, that there cannot possibly be incessant robbery without production, that the character of the robbed must finally determine the character of the robber. Clausewitz, too, started, as we know, from the elementary insight that the "social union" cannot exist and develop in the midst of a state of permanent exercise of force, i.e., uninterrupted war, although its own constitution makes war unavoidable at certain intervals. Marx and Engels deny for their part, and rightly so, the equation of society or history and exercise of force, at the same time however they remain convinced that all previous societies and historical stages since the exit of mankind from the state of barbarism rested on certain relations of domination and servitude. But already from this it follows that these latter relations, which by their nature are to be regarded as power relations, must mean something other than mere exercise of force, that they thus do not dissolve into the exercise of force and that therefore exercise of force and exercise of power do not coincide. Marx and Engels, however, identify consistently and erroneously force and relations of domination and only thereby do they enable themselves to assert the primacy of the economy or the mode of production without many theoretical complications and to celebrate an easy argumentative triumph: since the primacy of the economy over naked force in social life is obvious (one must eat before one can exercise force at all, whereby the production of food can and must be continuous in contrast to the exercise of force), the identification of domination or power and force amounts *eo ipso* to the assertion of the primacy of the economy also over the former.

This confusion of terms and levels makes it difficult not least to understand the motivation and purposes of the exercise of force, which would do justice to the multidimensionality of the question. Even if one wanted to admit without further ado that the purpose of the exercise of force is the appropriation of foreign labor products and foreign labor power, it is not yet explained what this appropriation is supposed to be good for and for what it is supposed to be used. To the extent that the appropriated labor products amount to more and the appropriated labor forces produce more than what the one exercising force can consume or at least store, the question must arise what consequences the gained plus in wealth and thus in power of disposal

[611] "Strategy, command, leadership, courage, discipline, supply, organization, and all the moral and physical paraphernalia of war are as nothing to a high superiority of weapons - at most they go to form the one per cent", Fuller, *Machine Warfare*, 61 f.; cf. Allen, *Influence*, 353: "... over the centuries war has become vastly different, and the difference is largely owing to the nature of weapons used... differing types of leadership have not had decisive influence on the nature of warfare...".

over people has for the social status of the person concerned.[612] The pure economic motivation of the exercise of force arises, in other words, exclusively or primarily from physical self-preservation or at least comfort needs (the typical example for this are the above-described wars of primitive classless societies against each other), but what goes beyond these needs must or at least can give force and its exercise a new and broader meaning. This conclusion imposes itself also when we become aware that Engels' description of the emergence of private property contains a logical leap. According to Engels, private property appears in history "by no means as result of robbery and force," but "for economic reasons," namely as a result of changed relations of production and exchange, in the interest of increasing production and promoting intercourse.[613] If, therefore, the development of the division of labor and production makes available a surplus of products and labor power, which is possibly exchanged with other products inside the community or outside of it, then and only then arises that which can withdraw from common possession and fall to private property. That may be correct, but it concerns only the *material prerequisite* of the emergence of private property and not the *subjective motivation* standing here for debate, which drives towards this emergence. Unexplained remains therefore the necessity of the connection between the surplus in the field of production and private appropriation in the sphere of *distribution*; by deriving the latter immediately from the former, a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλον γένος* is present here. Asked more directly: why does the produced surplus not remain in the common possession of the collective and is not distributed equally among its members, why do individuals fall like vultures upon this surplus at the moment of its production itself and want to claim it exclusively for themselves? What drives them to it, especially since they allegedly lived for generations in a classless community and had been educated according to its social principles and customs? The striving for private appropriation cannot come about if we do not presuppose the existence of an acquisitive drive, which until then slumbered or could vent itself in another way.

Engels emphasizes now that civilization set the dirtiest drives and passions of man in motion and developed them at the expense of all his other aptitudes. "Base greed was the driving soul of civilization from its first day to the present".[614] His version of the emergence of private property, however, can only explain what could give *food* to greed, and not why it came into the

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[612] This applies to individuals and groups within more or less developed societies as well as to states or nations, especially in the industrial age: what is taken or brought under control is not only what one's own economy can need and consume based on "purely economic" criteria, but if possible everything that will likely strengthen the relative power position of the party concerned in the competitive struggle against other states or nations.

[613] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 150 f.

[614] *Der Ursprung der Familie*, MEW, 21, 171. Similarly Marx, Theorien über den Mehrwert, MEW, 26 (1), 364: "Without national crimes, would the world market ever have come into being? Indeed, would even nations? And is the tree of sin not at the same time the tree of knowledge?"

world at all if it was previously completely unknown or if no related feelings or drives preceded it. Engels had, however, as we know, spoken of the specifically human "cruelty" with which classless communities warred against each other. The presumption would therefore be thoroughly sensible that that anthropologically given drive potential, which initially condensed in the cruelty of the warriors and was activated ceaselessly in the frequent wars, turned away from the enemy outside the own tribe, targeted the just emerging surplus of products and labor power and thereby assumed (also) the shape of greed etc. The first who appropriated this surplus were probably those who already earlier held a non-profit "office," e.g. that of war leader, by virtue of their physical abilities and talents (Engels admits himself that social differentiation in this natural sense existed even before the emergence of private property). Appropriation took place thus initially in the form of a confirmation and consolidation of the already existing social status: the new economic possibilities benefited this status and through it they were also taken into possession. If this reconstruction of the course of events is correct—and I do not see in what other way the logical leap in Engels' version could be eliminated—then the striving for private appropriation can be traced back primarily to the effect of status or power considerations which existed even before the emergence of a significant surplus and were supported by an anthropologically given drive potential.

In the earliest phase of this development, status and physical superiority often coincided, so that power and force exercise largely overlapped. The decisive turn occurs when force and power separate from one another, not of course in the sense that power no longer needs force or that power turned against force or force against power as a rule (although of course power must suppress any force not controlled by itself, while force on the part of the enemies of the power holders is not yet quite power, but fights organized power for the time being), but simply in the sense that exercise of power and exercise of force do not have to be simultaneous and intertwined processes. Only after its separation from naked, (almost) uninterrupted exercise of force can power fully develop parallel with the formation of culture. As disposal over people with the help of material and ideological means, power is twofold. On the level of subjective motivation, it forms the ultimate purpose of the one whose immediate purpose lies in the appropriation of the surplus of labor products and labor power—therefore every permanent and effective appropriation in the economic field must flow into a direct or indirect political claim to rule; on the level of social organization, power appears again as a system or institutionally solidified structure, whereby the uninterrupted exercise of force together with the physical superiority enabling it becomes largely or entirely superfluous, even if the exercise of force remains in the background as *ultima ratio* and also often comes to the fore; thanks to this suspension of the exercise of force by power, the process of civilization becomes possible, and indeed in such a way that now through the striving to perfect the eventual exercise of force technically, the same is placed in the service of civilization in many ways (war economy and

development of technology e.g.). The external characteristics of the transformation of force into power are two: a) in the system of power, force is not (or not necessarily) exercised by the power holder himself, but by armed organs acting on his behalf, and b) power is exercised not exclusively by force or by material means, but also by ideological means, which evoke or encourage behaviors that are convenient to the respective system of power. If the separation and at the same time the inner relationship of power and force is understood in this way, then the question of Engels to Dühring can be easily answered, which reads, how a minority can rule over the physically much stronger majority if force is actually the decisive factor.[615] If social power and naked force were identical, as Engels erroneously assumes here, then of course a rule of the minority over the majority would be out of the question. The essence of power, however, has moved far away from the essence of force within culture—so much so that power claims can appear in the name of non-violence, and therefore power can achieve what naked force is never able to bring about.

These considerations on the relationship between appropriation in the economic field and power or between economic motivation and power striving can also illuminate Engels' cited views on the dependence of superiority in war on economic superiority, as this is reflected in weapons technology and production, from another aspect. The correctness of this finding cannot be doubted, as already said, but the question is what is proven by it and what is implied in it. From the point of view of our problem, it depends mainly on whether weapons are produced and perfected simply because the existing technical-economic potential makes this possible, or whether their maximally abundant and perfect production appears indicated because power purposes are envisioned which can only be achieved by such weapons. Of course, this production is not undertaken by force (force cannot equip itself and in this sense it remains always dependent on the economy), it takes place however *with regard to power purposes*, and this refers already to another sphere. Only this distinction between economic level and power purpose can explain the phenomenon frequent especially in the industrial age and historically important, that states which stand under power-political pressure by no means await the independent progress of the economy in order to acquire perfected weapons and thus to be equal to the competition of economically stronger enemies also militarily, but on the contrary promote those branches of the economy which are of direct military importance. The phenomenon did not escape the attention of Marx and Engels, incidentally, who pointed to the economically and socially progressive function of armies in underdeveloped countries.[616] But they also registered cases in which an entire economic development or the modernization of a backward economy was set in motion under the pressure of political necessities. In this perspective Engels saw the rise of Russian industry after the Crimean War: "The defeats in the

[615] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 166.
[616] S. den nächsten Abschnitt, S. 190 ff.

Crimean War had made clear the necessity of rapid industrial development for Russia. Above all, railways were needed, and these are not possible on a large scale without domestic heavy industry. The precondition for this was the so-called emancipation of the peasants etc."[617] The generalization derived from this observation read: "From the moment when warfare became a branch of the *grande industrie* (ironclad ships, rifled artillery, quick-firing repeating cannons, repeating rifles, steel-jacketed bullets, smokeless powder, etc.), the *grande industrie*, without which all these things cannot be produced, became a political necessity".[618]

The actual intertwinement of technical-economic development and power factors can thus deviate considerably from the simplistic schema according to which the economy in its independent forward movement makes means of force available which could then serve power purposes. With reference to this same intertwinement, Marx's view of the determining role of the "means of production" for the "labor organization" (so 1866) or even for the "social relations" in general (so 1849) must also be judged. Labor organization and social relations are two different things, however, and the difference in the kind and extent of their influence or "determination" by the means of production constitutes precisely not least a function of power factors, which become the more visible the more the social whole is kept in mind in its hierarchical structure. One can, of course, consider the social whole exclusively from the standpoint of economizing or labor and identify it with labor organization, i.e., conceive it as that ensemble of interpersonal relationships which must necessarily exist so that production can take place at all through the existing means of production. Historical experience shows, however, that this necessity does not enforce itself equally on all levels of social life and therefore it does not seem particularly helpful to cover with the same name areas which stand under the sign of respectively different "determinations." It is more expedient and more appropriate to reserve the term "labor organization" for the narrower area in which the means of production are used directly for the production of certain products, whereby—especially with developed division of labor—the producers must be organized or hierarchized in a certain way so that an optimal use of the existing means of production can be achieved. If this optimal use forms the primary purpose, then it is obvious that labor must be organized with regard to the constitution of the means of production, which in this sense actually constitutes the determining factor. Now if labor organization in this narrower sense were the germ, miniature and model of social organization as a whole, then societies which disposed of the same or similar technology

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[617] Nachwort zu "*Soziales aus Rußland*", MEW, 18, 669. The same interpretive scheme underlies when Engels traces the early capitalist modernization of agriculture in Germany back to the defeat of the nobility in the struggle against the princes: "From the struggles of the Reformation period only the German territorial princes had gained increased power. The noble trade of highway robbery was now at an end. If the nobility did not want to go under, it had to extract more revenue from its landed property..." (*Die Mark*, MEW, 19, 327).

[618] Letter to Danielson vom 22. 9. 1892 = MEW, 38, 467.

would have to be organized identically or similarly in political-institutional respects. But this has not been, or not always, the case in history. To cite a modern example: the similarity of labor organization in a Soviet factory and in an American one which produces analogous products is much greater than that of the political organization of both states. If we may apply to the Soviet case the conceptual apparatus which Marx used with regard to the phenomenon of conquest (conquest from within and conquest from without show incidentally not a few analogies): the conqueror, i.e., the Bolshevik party, has not been able to change production in the narrower sense, as it is conditioned by the means of production (if we apply the international technological level as a yardstick), but it has largely sovereignly determined the "distribution" of the instruments of production and of the people through its fullness of power—a prominent case of economic appropriation which proceeded through force, but with regard to power purposes.

One more remark on Engels' methodological undergirding of the primacy of the economy. When it is said that force has always remained the same in history, while production developed and through this its development could make the development in the other areas of society understandable, two different conceptual levels are confused with one another, namely the permanent function of a category of action with its respective content. Whoever regards force as an immutable and therefore neutral constant can just as well say the same of economizing and producing in *abstracto*: both are categories of action which lose themselves in the beginnings of human history and have accompanied this history since then. On the other hand, however, the socio-political framework within which and with reference to which force was exercised in history has changed from time to time no less than the means of production too—and only the shortsighted reduction of power to force creates the impression that everything depends here exclusively on the use of weapons, thus again ultimately on weapons production and the corresponding technology and economy. Thus we are thrown back to the doctrinaire and thankless fundamental question of what "the" original and primary in the history of human beings is.

We do not want to investigate here to what extent the doctrinaire adherence to the primacy of the economy intertwined with eschatological considerations, in the sense namely that the development of productive forces up to the point of the abolition of any scarcity of goods and thus any necessity of distribution and rule appeared, beyond all moralism and all expectation of moral improvement of people, as the only compelling objective reason for the establishment of a classless society. In terms of intellectual history, this adherence—which led precisely to the misjudgment of the specific problem of power via the detour of a rather naive identification of power and force, although Marx and Engels otherwise described important aspects of the exercise of power and rule adequately—stems largely from the world of thought of liberal

economism, in which the notion of the *homo oeconomicus*, the hope for the replacement of war by trade and the sharp national-economic separation between productive and unproductive labor went hand in hand. We know that liberal pacifism was not the affair of Marx and Engels; but the image of man as a tool-creating and working animal as well as the narrow grasp of the economic in its contrast to the political or military e.g. characterized their thinking from very early times. Thus the young Engels turned against the standing armies, which "withdraw from the nation the strongest and most useful part of the population and force it to feed this part which has thereby become unproductive," and held out the prospect that in communist society the masses of labor forces "which are withdrawn from the peoples by the armies" would be given back to labor. Similarly Marx argued in 1860 when he commented on the war preparations in Prussia,[619] while on the theoretical level he accepted the distinction between productive and unproductive workers, although he admitted the occasional and temporary necessity of a military protection of production activity and defended A. Smith against the accusation that he had overlooked this necessity.[620] In the next section we will see, however, that these statements or the remnants of liberal economism in the thought of Marx and Engels did not prevent a sober and multifaceted assessment of the social functions of the army.

[619] *Preparations for War in Prussia*, NYDT 23. 10. 1860 = CW, 17, 495.
[620] *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, MEW, 26 (1), 260 f.

3. The Army and its Social Functions

As we remember, Marx already in early times wanted to illustrate his theory of the determination of labor organization or social relations by the means of production preferably by the example of the army, an example, however, which proves the validity of the theory only under the condition that the talk of labor organization is understood in its narrower sense. Later, too, he repeated that "the relationship of productive force and forms of intercourse becomes particularly obvious in the army," but this time he placed beside this general thesis an additional observation, namely that of the emergence or formation of certain pioneering economic phenomena first in the womb of the army and in the service of purposes of the army, i.e., of war purposes: "War developed earlier than peace; way in which certain economic relations like wage labor, machinery etc. developed earlier through war and in the armies etc. than in the interior of bourgeois society".[621] He cited more detailed examples for this in the following remarkable passage: "The history of the army brings out more clearly than anything the correctness of our view of the connection between productive forces and social relations. In general, the army is important for economic development. E.g. salary first fully developed in the army among the ancients. Likewise among the Romans the *peculium castrense*, first legal form in which the movable property of non-fathers of families was recognized. Likewise the guild system in the corporation of the *fabri*. Likewise here the first application of machinery on a large scale. Even the special value of metals and their use as money seems originally—as soon as Grimm's stone age was over—to rest on their warlike significance. Also the division of labor within one branch was first carried out in the armies. The whole history of bourgeois societies is further very strikingly resumed in it".[622]

It would be premature to conclude that Marx is here directly or indirectly abandoning basic positions of historical materialism by shifting the main motor of economic development into the area of the army and armed conflict. Rather, it seems as if, under the impression of his first fundamental insight into the exemplary shape in which the determination of labor organization by the means of production appears in the army, he heaps up partly heterogeneous phenomena to lend emphasis to that first insight, although in purely logical terms an additional underpinning of the theory is not achieved thereby. The general theses that introduce the quoted passage, moreover, neither necessarily belong together nor are they readily derivable from the cited examples. The illustration of the connection between productive forces and social relations proves nothing in itself regarding the importance of the army for economic development, and the observation of this importance says nothing in itself about its extent. Is this importance then so great that the economic and labor organization that first appeared in the

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[621] *Grundrisse*, 29.

[622] Letter to Engels vom 25. 9. 1857, MEW, 29, 192.

army must sooner or later prevail in society as a whole? Marx obviously cannot answer this question in the affirmative. He regards the progressive or even pioneering economic and organizational forms initiated by the army not as the (budding) determining force of the mode of production and social intercourse, but either as more or less isolated phenomena which must perish in a differently structured environment, or as structures which indeed embody typical and decisive aspects of the new, but do not create it, but at most support it. In his magnificent description of the emergence of capitalism, the army, its equipment and its organization nowhere appear as a driving force determining general economic development. And the special reference to the formation of "salaries" in the Roman army was again relativized in other places by remarks which were intended to show that this could not amount to an enforcement of the money economy within the ancient economy in its entirety and that accordingly decisive differences had to exist between that pay system and wage labor under capitalism: "Among the Romans there was in the army a mass already separated from the whole people, disciplined for labor, whose surplus time belonged simultaneously to the state; who sold their entire labor time to the state for a salary... It is here likewise free sale of labor on the part of the soldier. But the state does not buy him for the purpose of the production of values. And so, although the form of the salary may seem to occur originally in armies, this system of pay is nevertheless essentially different from wage labor".[623] The introduction of payment in money thus took place as it were on the edge of the then prevailing mode of production and labor organization. And in the nature of this latter lay precisely the reason why the state could not be a capitalist and the mercenary not a proletarian: "In the Roman Empire, in its greatest development, tax in kind and delivery in kind remained the basis. The money system actually only fully developed there in the army. It also never seized the whole of labor".[624]

Much more decisively do Marx and Engels express themselves on the general structural belonging together of army and society, i.e., on the necessity of the correspondence between economic-political relations and army organization. This correspondence as well as the transition from one type of correspondence to another is established or also described with regard to different stages of historical development. We already know Engels' description of the self-evident unity of warriors and tribe within the classless community, at a time when war was partly a collective enterprise and in any case served goals that sprang from vital necessities of the whole collective;[625] the same close unity existed still among the migrating Germanic tribes,

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[623] *Grundrisse*, 428, Anm.*; cf. 371: "One of the forms in which this kind of pay first appears in the old communities is the army. The pay of the common soldier is also reduced to a minimum - is determined purely by the production costs at which he can be procured. But what he exchanges his service for is the revenue of the state, not capital".

[624] *Op. cit.*, 24.

[625] See also section 2, insb. S. 154.

who embarked on a possibly fatal adventure with every exodus and had to adjust their daily life to the requirements of success in incessant combat.[626] Only in class society does the separation between people and army become institutionalized, whereby the respective composition and organization of the latter depends on the physiognomy of the ruling class and on the respective outcome of the class struggle, thus on the respective balance of power between the classes. Especially in the ancient Greek-Roman class society, which, as Marx showed, created the city as the center of life of the landowners due to its specific organization and therefore developed a lively and varied political life, important transformations of the military system had to occur as a result of shifts in power and wealth redistributions within the stratum of the free. Engels registered the "political causes," i.e., the rise of the poorer citizens in Athens and the decline of the warlike aristocracy in Sparta as well as the general influence of trade and industry, which conditioned the gradual replacement of the old phalanx by light infantry and the mercenary army together with the associated consequences for tactics.[627] To "important social changes" he also traced the replacement of the militia, in which all citizens participated, by professional soldiers recruited from the poorer classes in Rome after the Second Punic War.[628] Military service ruined the Roman plebeians, it hindered them namely in the reproduction of their working conditions and made them debt slaves of the usurers or the patricians, whereby finally the transition from citizen to mercenary army became unavoidable.[629] A parallel to this process Marx and Engels saw in the ruin of the free peasants in the Carolingian period, which brought about the radical change of the old military constitution based on the military service of all freemen and the formation of feudal armies.[630]

Since the beginnings of capitalism, three great turning points become noticeable in the development of the military constitution, which connect with profound social changes. First came the replacement of feudal armies by royal armies. In the feudal army the nobility possessed the monopoly of bearing arms, and the soldiers were bound by closer ties to their immediate feudal lords than to the royal army command. This structure is now opposed by a new one, which rests partly on money and partly on industrial technology—both symbols of the budding bourgeois age. The cities provide not only the workshops that produce firearms, but also the money by means of which the kings now recruit or hire an ever-growing part of their troops, specifically from population strata that withdraw from the control of the feudal lords, such as the free peasants and the townspeople.[631] The second great turning point occurred with

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[626] Engels, *Zur Urgeschichte der Deutschen*, MEW, 19, 430 f., 432.
[627] Engels, *Infantry*, CW, 18, 341 f.
[628] *Ibid.*, 346.
[629] Marx, *Das Kapital*, I, MEW, 23, 755, note 211; III, MEW, 25, 612.
[630] *Ibid.*, 441, cf. Engels, *Fränkische Zeit*, MEW, 19, 491 ff.; cf. above notes 70 & 71.
[631] Engels, *Über den Verfall des Feudalismus und das Aufkommen der Bourgeoisie*, MEW, 21, 398-400; cf. *Army*, CW, 18, 105 f.

the victory of the bourgeois revolution and the associated emergence of an army of a radically new type. The victorious bourgeoisie is determinant here in a double respect: that as the educated stratum it produces the educated officers from its womb which a modern army needs, and that through the development of productive forces it guarantees the financial and material foundations of this same army; the parcel peasants, who emancipated themselves from feudalism simultaneously with the bourgeoisie, provide in turn the bulk of the soldiers.[632] The original *levée en masse* thus remains still thoroughly within the bourgeois framework and forms at most only a preliminary stage of the later gradual penetration of the proletarian mass into the army, wherein precisely the third great turning point in the history of the modern military constitution consists. We will have to speak about this in more detail, since Marx and Engels as revolutionary strategists promised themselves much from the intertwinement of army and proletariat through general conscription (see below). In a more general sense, interesting is the early reference to the structural analogy between modern industrial work and modern army organization. The workers in the factories are "organized like soldiers," they are placed "as common industrial soldiers under the supervision of a complete hierarchy of non-commissioned officers and officers".[633] This seemed indeed inhumane and degrading, but did not necessarily form a disadvantage with regard to the future of the revolution. Engels explained the successes of the Parisian workers on the barricades of 1848 by the fact that they had already been "organized quite militarily and divided into companies" in the National Workshops, so that they only needed to transfer their industrial organization to their warlike activity in order to form immediately a fully structured army.[634]

The fundamental assessment of the social function of the army by Marx and Engels is unambiguous and well known. The army is a main instrument in the hands of the respective ruling class, a particularly conspicuous embodiment of the inhumanity of every class society: "Legislature, magistracy and armed force, are all of them but the offspring of improper conditions of society, preventing those arrangements among men which would make useless the compulsory intervention of a third supreme power".[635] in the constellation of the beginning second half of the 19th century, this meant concretely that the army generally supported the class rule of the bourgeoisie, which indeed displayed an anti-militarist disposition in its struggle against absolutism, only to separate itself from it hastily and fall into the arms of the formerly detested military despotism as soon as it saw itself facing the rebellious proletariat: in this way at least Marx wanted to unveil "the secret of the standing armies of Europe".[636] Now this

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[632] Engels, *Bedingungen und Aussichten eines Krieges der Heiligen Allianz*, MEW, 7, 477.
[633] *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, I = MEW, 4, 469.
[634] *Die Junirevolution*, *Neue Rhein. Zeitung* July 1, 1848 = MEW, 5, 147.
[635] Marx, *The Indian Question*, *NYDT* July 11, 1853 = CW, 12, 159.
[636] Marx, *Revolution in Spain*, *NYDT* Aug. 8, 1856 = CW, 15, 102.

fundamental position was repeated now and then with emphasis, but by no means was everything said with it that Marx and Engels had to say about the social function of the army. Whenever the concrete case was concerned, partly significantly different possibilities were considered, which could not be subsumed under the sweeping assertion that the army would be condemned by its nature to play reactionary roles always and everywhere. Even from the perspective of revolutionary strategy on the European level, it had to be conceded that the armies of certain states, despite all counter-revolutionary attitude and effect domestically, were nevertheless indispensable in foreign policy and worked objectively in a progressive sense insofar as they stood in the way of the expansionism of other states which embodied the European counter-revolution as it were and whose enforcement in the European space had to mean a direct setback for the revolutionary forces. The paradox that armies which proceeded repressively internally offered resistance externally, for whatever reasons, to even more repressive forces, made the fundamental judgment of the social function of "the" army totter or be overlaid by superordinate practical viewpoints when it was a matter of acting concretely politically with revolutionary intent. The unavoidable ambiguity resulting from this appears in a speech by Marx, which begins with the stereotypical statement that the reinforcement of the large standing armies in Europe had been caused by the revolution of 1848 and was intended to serve the suppression of the workers and not, for instance, the waging of international wars, only to turn at the end against the advocates of a peace at any price: these "would gladly leave Russia alone in possession of the means to wage a war against the rest of Europe; yet the mere existence of such a power as Russia would be reason enough for all other countries to maintain their armies".[637] Engels, too, advocated the reorganization of the Prussian army with the argument, among others, that striking troops were needed anyway as long as one had the French army on the one side, the Russian on the other.[638] Beyond that, he opined that the domestic political viewpoint alone cannot be decisive for the strength of an army, but that foreign policy or the foreign political competition continuing independently of the internal constitution of the states forms a first-rate and independent factor in this: "It is quite correct that armies are the tools with which coups d'état are made, and that therefore every army reinforcement also increases the feasibility of a coup d'état. But the army strength required for a large state is directed not according to the greater or lesser prospect of a coup d'état, but according to the size of the armies of the other large states".[639] Finally, the strength of the Prussian army had remained the same as in 1820, while all other great powers, namely France,

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[637] *Aufzeichnung einer Rede von Marx über die Stellung der IAA zum Kongreß der Friedens- und Freiheitsliga* (Aug. 13, 1867), MEW, 16, 530.
[638] *Die preußische Militärfrage und die deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, MEW, 16, 54.
[639] *Ibid.*, 61.

from which the danger threatened precisely now, had significantly increased their army power.[640]

The foreign policy function of the army can thus overshadow its domestic political function partly from the view of revolutionary strategy, partly also from the inherent dynamics of foreign policy. Already this shows that the army possibly assumes roles which do not necessarily coincide with that of the mere will-less instrument of rule in the interior. Interestingly, a certain independence of goal-setting and action is conceded to it even in some cases in which it by and large defends the existing relations of domination in society against the danger from below, but does not readily identify with the ruling class in doing so. Marx and Engels encountered such a case in the Bonapartist dictatorship. The self-confidence of the army grew here also vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie precisely because, by saving the existing social order, it had been able to establish its own irreplaceability as a support of this same order. An army that has already saved the ruling class a few times from a bad end must, however, come to the thought of rather saving society once and for all by proclaiming its own regime as the supreme one and completely relieving bourgeois society of the worry of governing itself... "Should the military not finally play state of siege once also in its own interest and for its own interest and at the same time besiege the bourgeois stock exchanges?"[641] France had indeed been governed by the army since Napoleon, but this army basically always supported the social rule of a certain class, first that of the peasants, later that of the landowners and after 1830 that of the bourgeoisie. Different after 1851: "Under the second Empire the interest of the army is to predominate. The army is no longer to maintain the rule of one part of the people over another part of the people. The army is to maintain its own rule, personated by its own dynasty, over the French people in general. It is to represent the State in antagonism to the society".[642] If the Bonapartist dictatorship alienates itself from all classes—both from those which it had supported in the hour of need, and from those by whom it had been supported during its rise, by not being able to satisfy them materially,[643] then "the substitution of the rule of the army for rule by the army" must occur.[644]

This army now looks for means and ways to translate its strengthened self-confidence into deeds. In view of the achieved balance of forces in its own country, it cannot unfold any activity here that would correspond to its urge for action, it must therefore want war against other states in order to make booty in war in the narrow and broad sense of the word, i.e., to collect

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[640] Engels, *Die Rolle der Gewalt*..., MEW, 21, 425.
[641] *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*..., II = MEW, 8, 130.
[642] Marx, *The Rule of the Pretorians*, *NYDT* Mar. 12, 1858 = CW, 15, 465.
[643] *Ibid.*, 466; cf. Marx, *Peace or War*, *NYDT* Mar. 25, 1859 = CW, 16, 257: "Louis Napoleon can never more be the demigod of the Bourse and the Bourgeois. He rules henceforth by the sword alone".
[644] Marx, *Political Parties in England - Situation in Europe*, *NYDT* June 24, 1858 = CW, 15, 568.

promotions and medals, but at the same time to distinguish itself as the great representative and champion of national interests and national greatness. It is not actually a matter here of a war of the ruling class to achieve its own political or economic goals (quite independently of the willingness of this class to participate in the fruits of a victory), but rather of a war of this army independently dictating and driving politics. The dictator himself must become the executor of the army's war policy if he wants to keep his position: "The army is his main support, he must satisfy it by new warlike successes, by the chastisement of the powers that cast down France in those years, by the restoration of the natural borders of the country... On the French throne a ruler who must wage war, who must conquer, just to be able to exist".[645] In doing so, he must of course be careful not to let himself be plunged by the military into adventures that would be fatal for him in case of a defeat, he must therefore maneuver and navigate, in case of doubt undertake a demonstration campaign for the mere salvation of his own prestige instead of a real war.[646] In any case, a sword of Damocles hangs over his head, and his personal position would possibly worsen if the autonomy of the army had not produced phenomena of dissolution within this same army. The French soldier saved the bourgeoisie from the revolution and was celebrated by it as the savior of the fatherland, he supported Louis Bonaparte and was called by him the restorer of the Empire; therefore he soon developed the ethos and disposition of the Praetorian, he became insolent and undisciplined.[647] This showed itself already during the Crimean War, thanks to the earlier efficient organization of the army, however, such phenomena of degeneration could be neutralized overall and respectable war achievements produced;[648] the French army was after all superior to the English in everything in the war, sometimes even in bravery.[649] Although the "admirable organization" of this army initially resisted the harmful influence of the new political milieu, it had to succumb finally, especially in view of its changed social composition,[650] to that disease which had its origin in the character of the regime itself: "theft and embezzlement". And when moral dissolution combined with undisciplinedness and unreliability, the dictator created new guard regiments as guarding and control instruments in the army itself: "having bribed the army into antagonism to the country,

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[645] Engels, *Savoyen, Nizza und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 608. Similarly Marx, *The French Disarmament*, *NYDT* Aug. 12, 1859 = CW, 16, 443; cf. Marx, *The Invasion Panic in England*, *NYDT* Dec. 9, 1859 = CW, 16, 547.
[646] Marx, *Zur Geschichte der französischen Allianz*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Mar. 27, 1855 = MEW, 11, 157.
[647] Engels, *The Attack on Sevastopol*, *NYDT* Oct. 14, 1854 = CW, 13, 472.
[648] Engels, *The Armies of Europe, I: The French Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, August 1855 = CW, 14, 416.
[649] Engels, *The Great Event of the War*, *NYDT* Oct. 13, 1855 = CW, 14, 551.
[650] "The army itself is no longer the flower of the peasant youth, it is the swamp flower of the peasant lumpenproletariat", Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*..., VII = MEW, 8, 203.

he is now trying to bribe an army within the army".[651] The consequences of general corruption, demoralization and decay of discipline made themselves felt in an unmistakable way in 1870.[652]

This highlighting of the symptoms of degeneration in the French army as well as the lack of references to a noteworthy domestic political activity of the military, i.e., to a militarization of society, permit the conclusion that Marx and Engels see in the autonomy of the army established by them not the germ of a novel historically autonomous social formation, but rather a temporary phenomenon which arises for special reasons in certain constellations of the class struggle in the political field, only to disappear as soon as the historically fundamental direct correspondence of socio-economic and political rule is restored. In this respect, the attempt of some researchers to make out of Marx's analysis of Bonapartism the prototype of a modern theory of bureaucratic-military rule is at least exaggerated. This does not mean, however, that the more or less independent appearance of the army on the political stage was regarded as a mere misstep of history without noteworthy consequences. With regard to the concrete situation of the 1860s, Marx and Engels even opined that the emerging antagonism between military and civil—which incidentally did not worry them as such, since they did not think much of a condemnation of militarism in the liberal-civilian sense—would entail a detachment of the army from the role of the blind protector of the existing order.[653] Also conceivable appeared not only the case in which an army of reactionary origin and composition could fulfill objectively progressive functions, but also the possibility of an originally progressive or even revolutionary attitude of the army. This came into question above all for countries in which nationalism was a forward-driving force and the army its only or main bearer. That nationalism had advanced to a first-rate political and historical force after the French Revolution did not remain hidden from Marx and Engels, of course, and they also knew the moral value of this nationalism for a modern army, already demonstrated by the Napoleonic army. Let us recall the reasons Engels gave for the collapse of the royal army of Naples before Garibaldi: "there is no life, no spirit, no patriotism, no fidelity in it. It has no national military tradition... It is not a National army. It is a purely Royal army".[654]

In countries now that are just crossing the threshold to modern bourgeois-industrial society, especially outside Europe, the army can become the first national institution at all, the hearth of national consciousness and the bond of national unity, in short the decisive nation-building

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[651] Marx, *The France of Bonaparte the Little*, *People's Paper* Apr. 5, 1856 = CW, 14, 618, 620.
[652] Engels, *Über den Krieg*, XIV, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Aug. 31, 1870 = MEW, 17, 78; *Aufstieg und Niedergang von Armeen*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Sept. 10, 1870 = MEW, 17, 100.
[653] "The military, the actual rulers of the continent since 1849, have got divided among themselves, and have given up their calling of preserving order, for the purpose of asserting their own opinion in opposition to the Government", Marx-Engels, *That Bore of a War*, *NYDT* Aug. 17, 1854 = CW, 13, 338.
[654] *Garibaldi's Movements*, *NYDT* Aug. 23, 1860 = CW, 17, 451.

factor. Thus in India e.g.: "The native army, organized and trained by the British drill-sergeant, was the sine qua non of Indian self-emancipation, and of India ceasing to be the prey of the first foreign intruder".[655] The British therefore erred when they considered the uprising of the Indian troops in 1857 a mere mutiny, which in reality was a national revolt.[656] By creating these troops, they organized simultaneously, without wanting or knowing it, "the first general center of resistance which the Indian people was ever possessed of".[657] Admittedly, this army, commanded by foreign officers, remains headless and therefore incapable of fully deploying its national potential and bringing the uprising against the conqueror to a successful conclusion; the lack of a national command makes it internally disjointed, and the "internal dissensions" have also become the cause of its defeat.[658] Also in a European country like Spain the army could, albeit here for other reasons, not quite and not to the end do justice to its national role, nevertheless the idea of modern national statehood during a critical phase of Spanish history was able to embody itself only in it: "What we call the State in a modern sense, has, from the exclusively provincial life of the people, no national embodiment in opposition to the Court, except in the army... the peculiar position of Spain and the Peninsular war created conditions under which it was only in the army that everything vital in the Spanish nationality was permitted to concentrate... the only national demonstrations (1812, 1822) proceeded from the army; and thus the movable part of the nation has been accustomed to regard the army as the natural instrument of every national rising".[659] The national character of the Spanish army effected the overcoming of all estate and feudal particularisms, and the presence of all strata of Spanish society in its ranks dynamized and revolutionized it, especially at the time of the War of Independence, so that it could support the subsequent liberal uprisings in the interior.[660] The failure of its national and political enterprises, however, brought about its internal dissolution and the enforcement of the Praetorian element, and finally it became partly instrument, partly scourge of its respective masters from all parties.[661]

Also in another important respect the army can fulfill progressive social functions, namely as a modernization factor that urges directly or indirectly for the renewal of economy and society and as the first also realizes this renewal in itself. Obviously, the observation of this function of the army implies again a primacy of foreign policy: for precisely the competition with other states drives to tackle the modernization of the army with priority and thereby to initiate a

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[655] Marx, *The Future Results of the British Rule in India*, *NYDT* Aug. 8, 1853 = CW, 12, 218.
[656] Marx, *Indian News*, *NYDT* Aug. 14, 1857 = CW, 15, 316.
[657] Marx, *The Revolt in the Indian Army*, *NYDT* June 15, 1857 = CW, 15, 297 f.
[658] Marx, *The Revolt in India*, *NYDT* Aug. 4, 1857 = CW, 15, 305; *NYDT* Nov. 14, 1857 = CW, 15, 375.
[659] Marx, *The Spanish Revolution*, *NYDT* Aug. 4, 1854 = CW, 13, 309 f.
[660] Marx, *Revolutionary Spain*, V and VII, *NYDT* Oct. 30, 1854 and Dec. 2, 1854 = CW, 13, 423, 444.
[661] *Ibid.*; Marx, *Revolution in Spain*, *NYDT* Aug. 18, 1854 = CW, 13, 401; Engels, *The Armies of Europe, IX: The Spanish Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, December 1855 = CW, 14, 469.

modernization process which must gradually encompass ever wider areas of economy and society. Marx and Engels were able to observe this phenomenon both in Europe and in the non-European area. In 19th-century Europe, a "revolution" was evoked by the general appropriation of the Napoleonic art of war; even the most reactionary states had to adapt to it and thereby found a connection to the bourgeois age: "The leveling influence of the bourgeois epoch is also still felt here; the old national peculiarities are also disappearing in the armies," for all are now "fairly equally well-organized machines," although they have very different qualities in combat.[662] A further reason for the modernization of armies was of course also their competition among themselves, which e.g. forced the Prussians to rethink and relearn in view of the French successes against Austria.[663] Every serious modernization must, however, take place in the spirit of the bourgeois-industrial epoch, it must thus bring with it on the one hand a unification which e.g. in the field of armament enables the unimpeded supply with mass-produced ammunition, and on the other hand promote a purposive-rational, practical and utilitarian attitude which amounts to a departure from the pedantry and fanfaronades of the old parade army.[664]

Engels noted that despite the more or less equal organization of European armies of his time, differences continued to exist among them which lay in national character, in historical tradition, and above all in the different civilization level of the various countries; the latter seemed to him also finally to be the decisive factor of military superiority.[665] In the case of a civilizationally backward nation that *nolens volens* adopts a modern army organization, a discrepancy must arise between the level of the army and the level of the country, whereby the army represents progress and therefore cannot fully unfold within the general backwardness and receives a socially ambiguous character. A model example for this is offered by the Russian army: "the Russian army still bears the stamp of an institution in advance of the general state of civilization of the country, and has all the disadvantages and drawbacks of such hot-house creations".[666] Although it represents in itself the most perfect link of the entire Russian administration,[667] it reflects on the other hand in its military-theoretical sterility, in the lack of initiative and in blind obedience the semi-barbaric state of Russian society.[668] In a country without a bourgeoisie, educated officers can hardly be found, which in turn makes the effective deployment of large masses of soldiers difficult; equipment becomes obsolete, and the bad conditions in the economy place considerable obstacles in the way of any major military

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[662] Engels, *Bedingungen und Aussichten eines Krieges der Heiligen Allianz...*, MEW, 7, 474 f., 476.
[663] Engels, *Military Reform in Germany*, *NYDT* Feb. 20, 1860 = CW, 17, 345 ff.
[664] *Ibid.*
[665] Engels, *The Armies of Europe*, *Putnam's Monthly*, August 1855 = CW, 14, 404, 405.
[666] Engels, *The Armies of Europe, II: The Russian Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, September 1855 = CW, 14, 447.
[667] Engels, *Europe in 1858*, *NYDT* Dec. 23, 1858 = CW, 16, 121.
[668] Engels, *The Armies of Europe, II: The Russian Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, September 1855 = CW, 14, 443-5.

action.[669] Added to the social hybrid character of the army is its organizational heterogeneity, which is likewise connected with the semi-barbaric physiognomy of the huge country. The Napoleonic organizational system applies actually only along the western border, where one faces European armies, while the troop in Asia resembles in many ways the nomads fought by it and the tough mountain peoples in the Caucasus are held in check by a mixture of regular and irregular troops.[670]

The same unevenness and contradictoriness of development characterizes the Turkish army. Its Asian detachments contain in their ranks brave but undisciplined and unreliable soldiers, while the troop on the European territory of the Ottoman Empire appears fairly disciplined and trained.[671] A branch of service like the artillery, which was organized with the help of French and Prussian officers and according to the European model,[672] enjoys a good reputation, thorough Europeanization remains impossible, however, in a country where the centralization of administration fails due to the autonomy aspirations of local rulers, where patriarchal loyalties favor favoritism and where above all rational organizational forms, which require strict discipline, regulated activity and constant mental concentration, come into conflict with the sluggish and fatalistic oriental attitude to life[673]—even if this same fatalism, which generates the apraxia of the officers, translates in the mass of soldiers into a tough resistance force which can be valuable in defensive warfare.[674] Although some oriental people, such as the Chinese, prove to be particularly capable of learning in practical matters like war,[675] the behaviors and value concepts that prevail in pre-industrial societies nevertheless form a main obstacle in every attempt to modernize the army of such a society; the modernization attempt of the army must therefore amount to an engagement with the question of modernization in general and on all levels. A modern army does not arise merely through adoption of external forms, from uniform and armament to combat tactics—all this is only a first step. Cultural limits make themselves really felt as soon as one sets out to form a competent stratum of officers and non-commissioned officers who would be free from native prejudices and habits of life; that can only be a long-term undertaking, "and is sure to meet with the most obstinate opposition from Oriental ignorance, impatience, prejudice, and the vicissitudes of fortune and favor inherent to Eastern courts".[676]

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669 See Engels' letters to Lafargue dated Mar. 7, 1890 (= MEW, 37, 363) and to Bebel dated Dec. 1, 1891 and Feb. 2, 1891 (MEW, 38, 226, 261).
670 Engels, *The Russian Army*, CW, 13, 125 f.
671 Marx, *The Fighting in the East*, *NYDT* Feb. 3, 1854 = CW, 12, 583.
672 Engels, *The Russians in Turkey*, *NYDT* Oct. 17, 1853 = CW, 12, 336.
673 Engels, *The Armies of Europe, I: The Turkish Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, December 1855 = CW, 14, 451, 455.
674 Engels, *The War in Asia*, *NYDT* Jan. 25, 1856 = CW, 14, 589 f.; *The War*, *The People's Paper* May 27, 1854 = CW, 13, 205.
675 Engels, *A new Expedition to China*, *NYDT* Apr. 17, 1857 = CW, 15, 246.
676 Engels, *Persia-China*, *NYDT* June 5, 1857 = CW, 15, 279 f.

In the British army Marx and Engels saw the typical example of an organization according to the wish and image of the ruling oligarchy and at the same time the typical case of a prevented democratization, which in turn prevented the general democratization of society. The British army embodied in its special way the marriage of landed and financial aristocracy, of blood and money privilege, on which class rule in Great Britain rested: "Blood e.g. outweighs a part of the places in the army—of family connection, nepotism, favoritism, but the principle of gold receives its right by all officer places being sellable and buyable for hard cash... The poorer officer... borrows capital to secure his advancement, and thus becomes a mortgaged being".[677] The practical result of these conditions were on the one hand the low educational level of the officers, who were supposed to prove themselves rather as "gentlemen" than as professionally competent people,[678] on the other hand the exclusion of many talents from promotion to higher positions and the obsolescence of the training system.[679] For the prominent members of the ruling oligarchy, regardless of political color, all this could not be felt as painful as long as their class retained absolute control over the army in this way. Thus Wellington saved the old army organization over time with the whole force of his authority; as long as he lived, only the new artillery tactics were introduced.[680] But also for Palmerston the fact that a large part of the officers were "men of property and connexions" meant a guarantee for the British constitution, so that he gladly accepted everything else, from the sale of commissions to flogging, as natural consequences thereof.[681] The political control of the oligarchy was guaranteed by the right of the Prime Minister to interfere even in the smallest details. Characteristically, Marx and Engels do not welcome this strong position of the civil vis-à-vis the military at all, but see it only as the politically self-interested reverse side of the inefficient administration of the army. So that the mentioned interference could be enabled, there had to be instead of a uniform impersonal administration countless departments and authorities with partly overlapping partly mutually neutralizing responsibilities, from which general irresponsibility and confusion arose.[682] As Marx summarized the political background of the British army organization: "The origin of this system rests obviously on constitutional precautionary measures against the standing army. Instead of a division of labor which would give the army the greatest elasticity, a division of powers which reduces its mobility to a minimum. But the system was held fast... because the

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[677] Marx, *Palmerston*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Mar. 3, 1855 = MEW, 11, 93; cf. Engels, *Die englische Armee*, MEW, 15, esp. 608, 611 f.

[678] Engels, *The Armies of Europe, II: The English Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, August 1855 = CW, 14, 422.

[679] Engels, *The Present Condition of the English Army*, *NYDT* June 10, 1854 = CW, 13, 210, 211.

[680] *Ibid.*, 208 f. Cf. Wellington's characterization in the letter from Engels to Marx dated Apr. 11, 1851 = MEW, 27, 235 f.

[681] Marx, *Lord Palmerston*, I, *The People's Paper* Oct. 22, 1853 = CW, 12, 349 f.

[682] Engels, *British Disaster in the Crimea*, *NYDT* Jan. 22, 1855 = CW, 13, 565 f.; Marx, *The British Army*, *NYDT* Apr. 14, 1855, CW, 14, 128.

oligarchic influence would be broken in this field at least simultaneously with a timely reform of the military administration".[683]

The control of the oligarchy and of the officer corps grown together with it over the mass of soldiers was secured by much simpler means, for which the punishment of flogging by the notorious "cat-o'-nine-tails" stood symbolically. Although cruel disciplinary methods produced unpleasant effects (e.g. desertions in the Crimean War, difficulties in the attempt to form foreign legions), they were not abolished despite protests and reform proposals. The punishment of flogging, wrote Marx and Engels, "is the instrument by which the aristocratic character of the English army is maintained, by which all higher positions from ensign on remain secured as appanage to the younger sons of the aristocracy and gentry." If it is eliminated, then "the immense distance between privates and officers falls, which splits the army into two formally different races. At the same time its ranks open to higher popular components than those from which it has hitherto been recruited".[684] The averting of such a development formed precisely a main concern of the ruling oligarchy, which recognized the political and social repercussions and prerequisites of a democratization of the army. It preferred therefore the recruitment of foreign soldiers, for the creation of a genuine English army would require abolition of corporal punishment, advancement from the ranks and generally elimination of estate barriers. Out of the same concern it did not want to get involved in any major war which would have to become a people's war with democratic goals if it were to be waged against arch-reactionary Russia. A people's war would not only democratize the army, but also make foreign policy a matter of the people, thus bringing about the loss of the government monopoly of the oligarchy.[685]

From the finding of the connection between prevented democratization in the army and prevention of democratization in society, as it showed itself in the British example, resulted *e contrario* the strategically important conclusion that the democratization of the army could initiate a democratization of the whole society, that thus the army could be wrested from the hands of the ruling class and repurposed in a democratic or even revolutionary sense. Especially Engels investigated this possibility, and the first occasion for this was known to be the Prussian army reform, which he judged first under the viewpoint of the liberal opposition and then in the light of the interests of the proletarian movement. In an analysis that testifies to unusual political foresight, Engels explained how the bourgeoisie should behave in the military

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[683] Marx, *Rückblicke*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Jan. 8, 1855 = MEW, 10, 598.
[684] Marx-Engels, *Züchtigung der Soldaten*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Aug. 31, 1855 = MEW, 11, 511; cf. Engels, *The Armies of Europe, II: The English Army*, *Putnam's Monthly*, August 1855 = CW, 14, 418 f.
[685] Marx, *Rückblicke*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Jan. 2, 1855 = MEW, 10, 589 f., 590. Engels also drew attention to the class character of the British Volunteer Force, which represented "the middle class" and only accepted workers because they were encouraged and controlled by their employers, see *The British Volunteer Force*, *NYDT* July 11, 1860 = CW, 17, 403.

question to serve its own socio-political goals and at the same time the general development of the country. The bourgeoisie, he writes in historical retrospect, can either win power in alliance with the lower classes or buy it off piecemeal from the upper ones. Since the German bourgeoisie did not want the former, it had to do the latter by supporting the reorganization plan, which incidentally took account of objective needs and was not to be stopped; it thus had to use this reorganization and the monies to be approved for it "to buy for itself from the 'New Era' as many equivalents as possible, to convert the 9 or 10 million new taxes into as much political power for itself as possible".[686] Through the support of the reorganization plan steps could moreover be taken by way of negotiations towards the bourgeoisification of the army or the officer corps, which was already suggested by the necessary expansion of the same.[687] Engels thus shared neither the illusions of German liberalism about its momentary political strength nor the liberal anti-militarist mythology, which incidentally stood in contradiction to the practice and the objective domestic and foreign policy needs of the bourgeoisie itself. For the "two good institutions" which Prussia had ahead of other large states, namely general conscription and general compulsory schooling, had a bourgeois-liberal character (in the sense of overcoming estate barriers); the bourgeoisie "found itself in these two institutions".[688] The unfolding of the bourgeoisie or the development of trade and industry made, however, not only the estate barriers and small-statehood in the interior, but also the lack of rights and protection abroad unbearable; the "double urge" of the bourgeoisie for removal of small-state traffic obstacles and for equal world market position alongside foreign competitors set "Bismarck's revolution" in motion.[689] The creation of a striking army through the reorganization plan lay therefore thoroughly in the interest and within the framework of the imagination of the bourgeoisie: "From the standpoint of the liberal opposition absolutely nothing could be said against it that would not have slapped its own phrases of Prussia's power position and German calling in the face as well".[690] The liberal reservations could therefore either concern only trivialities like the two-year maximum service period or were just hollow rhetoric: "Did not a contradiction exist in Germany in 1864 between the bourgeois representatives in the chamber, who wanted to haggle over the term of service, and the bourgeois outside in the National Association, who wanted national deeds at any price, deeds for which one needs military?".[691]

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[686] *Die preußische Militärfrage*..., MEW, 16, 56-8.
[687] *Ibid.*, 60. A few years earlier, however, Engels thought that the doubling of the number of Prussian officers would benefit exclusively the younger sons of the nobility seeking work, see *Preparations for War in Prussia*, *NYDT* Nov. 8, 1860 = CW, 17, 496.
[688] Engels, *Die Rolle der Gewalt*..., MEW, 21, 422.
[689] *Ibid.*, 426, 451.
[690] *Ibid.*, 425.
[691] *Ibid.*, 428.

In the common interest of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat lay the transformation of an army, which before and after 1848 belonged entirely to the old feudal-bureaucratic party,[692] into an institution which, by its composition, as this would have to result from a real implementation of general conscription, would have become "clumsier as a tool for coups d'état".[693] Beyond that, however, the revolutionary workers' party pursued its own goals, and from the implementation of general conscription it promised itself special results and advantages: "The more workers are trained in weapons, the better. General conscription is the necessary and natural complement to universal suffrage; it puts the voters in the position to enforce their decisions against all coup d'état attempts with weapons in hand".[694] General conscription should therefore be used by all "to learn combat, especially however by those whose education allows them to acquire military education as one-year volunteers to become officers".[695] In this perspective general conscription could be celebrated as the "only democratic institution" in Prussia, on the other hand however it was to be noted that it still existed only on paper and that the talk of the people in arms was lies and deception, since the Prussian dynasty and government favored a strengthening of the army only in the sense and to the extent that this served their plans,[696] but were afraid of a truly armed people; the overwhelming majority of the male population was therefore not called up at all.[697]

Engels perhaps overestimated the real prospects of wresting the Prussian army from the control of the reaction,[698] on the other hand however he did not believe that general conscription would automatically make a quasi-revolutionary organization out of the standing army. This remained indeed a desirable goal, but much work seemed necessary for it. The question was anyway of eminent importance in his eyes, since he had convinced himself of two fundamental political truths. First: "There are only two decisive powers in politics: the organized state power, the army, and the unorganized, elemental power of the popular masses".[699] And second: "It is an evident fact that the disorganization of armies and the complete relaxation of discipline was both condition and result of every hitherto victorious revolution".[700] The phenomena of

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[692] Engels, *Revolution und Konterrevolution in Deutschland*, X = MEW, 8, 58 f.
[693] Engels, *Die preußische Militärfrage...*, MEW, 16, 61, 62 f.; cf. Engels' letter to Marx dated Dec. 21, 1866 = MEW, 31, 270: "From the moment when any kind of general conscription is introduced in France, Praetorianism ceases of its own accord".
[694] *Die preußische Militärfrage...*, MEW, 16, 66; cf. Marx's letter to Kugelmann dated Dec. 13, 1870 = MEW, 33, 164: "However the war may end, it has given the French proletariat practice in arms, and that is the best guarantee of the future".
[695] *Anti-Dühring* (Vorarbeiten), MEW, 20, 587.
[696] *Die preußische Militärfrage...*, MEW, 16, 44.
[697] Engels, *Das Prinzip des preußischen Militärsystems*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Oct. 8, 1870 = MEW, 17, 127 f.
[698] Cf. the remarks by Höhn, *Sozialismus und Heer*, I, 145.
[699] *Die Rolle der Gewalt...*, MEW, 21, 431.
[700] Letter to Marx dated Sept. 26, 1851 = MEW, 27, 353.

dissolution in the army form obviously symptoms of a deep-seated crisis of the whole system and a sign of growing or final inability of the ruling class to continue exercising its rule. Conversely, the cohesion and discipline of the existing army must then mean that the situation is not yet ripe for revolutionary overthrow. Battles on the barricades can then bring no benefit: "The era of barricades and street battles has passed forever; if the troop fights, resistance becomes madness. So one is obliged to find a new revolutionary tactic".[701] The finding of such a tactic and thus the at least partial shifting of the center of gravity from the one "decisive power," namely the popular mass, to the other, namely the army, became all the more urgent for Engels as he did not expect "that we have the majority of voters, i.e., of the nation, behind us at the moment of crisis." In the case where the revolutionary party is still a minority and the revolutionary impulse comes not from outside, but from inside, the revolution can only proceed from the army. "An unarmed people against a modern army is militarily a purely vanishing magnitude".[702] Engels considered this question rather academic at that time, obviously however he never let go of the thought of a revolutionary functional change of the army. At the beginning of the 1890s he was at any rate optimistic enough in this regard to be able to write: "And if we get the rural districts of the six eastern provinces of Prussia... the German army belongs to us".[703] It seems here as if he had remembered once again that recipe which he recommended three decades earlier for the revolutionizing of the French army. The revolution, he opined then, would have to found secret societies in the army itself and then it would be certain that the latter, undermined "in the lower layers by the Reds, in the higher by Orleanists and Legitimists," would slip from the control of the Bonapartist regime.[704] This may have been a realistic or utopian prospect. In any case, however, it formed a further indication of the theoretical and practical readiness to see in the institution of the army not only a reality, but also a possibility, not only an inhibiting, but also a forward-driving force.

[701] Letter to Lafargue dated Nov. 3, 1892 = MEW, 38, 504 ff.
[702] Letter to Bebel dated Dec. 11/12, 1884 = MEW, 36, 253.
[703] Letter to Lafargue dated Aug. 17, 1891 = MEW, 38, 146 f.
[704] Letter to Marx dated Mar. 17, 1858 = MEW, 29, 305.

4. War and Revolution

The relationship between war and revolution is seen by Marx and Engels in the perspective of the question to what extent a war between states could promote or hinder the cause of revolution on the national or international level. They do consider the case in which the revolution could flow into a war against reactionary forces, but they do this for obvious reasons almost only in the time of 1848, in order to distance themselves tacitly from this thought to the extent that hopes for a speedy revolution fade. After the experiences with the powerlessness of the labor movement in all European wars between 1853 and 1866, Marx noted in 1868 that "the working class is not yet sufficiently organized to throw any decisive weight into the scale"—in this case, therefore, to prevent a future Prussian-French war.[705] The tensions that would set the revolution in motion again are expected, in view of this inadequacy of the working class, not from socio-political life inside the states, but rather from those conflicts which break out between European states and could either weaken reactionary governments or fulfill objectively progressive functions or even shake the whole European system. This attitude implies again that peculiar primacy of foreign policy which we already encountered in Marx and Engels and is reflected here, among other things, in the view that domestically reactionary governments and parties could serve the cause of revolution through their foreign policy. When Lassalle wanted to warn the two friends about Fischel (a German like-minded fellow of Urquhart), Engels recommended Marx to give Lassalle the answer that "in foreign policy nothing is done with 'reactionary' and that in this field even far greater 'donkeys' than Fischel are useful if they know the ropes. By the way, such a nice speculative separation of domestic policy is possible in this separate area of foreign policy that you will certainly have the fun of making clear to him the Subjective-Reactionary as the Objectively-Revolutionary in foreign policy".[706]

If, at least in the phases of revolutionary ebb, foreign policy considerations come to the fore and if no great and lasting results are expected even from a temporary flare-up of the revolutionary movement, then even a postponement of directly revolutionary efforts in favor of maintaining or achieving a foreign policy acceptable situation is envisaged. For Marx a revolution in Germany in 1859 would only cause a "disorganization" of the German army which "would have to benefit not the revolutionaries, but Russia and Boustrapa".[707] After the defeat of the Commune and the new standstill of the revolutionary movement entered thereby, he opined again, one had first to "go through" the expected European war "before any decisive external effectiveness of the European working class can be thought of".[708] But if the revolutionary

[705] Letter to Eccarius and Leßner dated Sept. 10, 1868 = MEW, 32, 558.
[706] Letter to Marx dated May 31, 1860 = MEW, 30, 59.
[707] Letter to Engels dated May 18, 1859 = MEW, 29, 432.
[708] Letter to Sorge dated Aug. 4, 1874 = MEW, 33, 635.

movement must (temporarily) direct its policy primarily according to foreign policy considerations and if it must regard foreign policy in general as (a) main area of its political activity, then it must also prove itself not least in this area, it must thus appear as the most vigorous representative of the "right cause" in foreign policy and advance its revolutionary goals precisely by way of identifying them with this cause. The cause of the nation as primary foreign policy magnitude thus becomes under certain circumstances the cause of the revolution, the revolution prevails because it can lead the nation successfully in the struggle of nations against each other. When Engels in 1859 foresaw a crisis which would "ruin all existing powers and tear open all parties one after another," he added: "In such a struggle the moment must occur where only the most ruthless, determined party is capable of saving the nation".[709] This (eventual) preponderance of the national question over class antagonisms or the confirmation of the ruling class primarily as leading class of the nation has however also a reverse side: no ruling class can assert itself as such internally if it cannot defend and strengthen the position of the nation in the foreign policy struggle. Thus Russia's defeat in the Crimean War brought Tsarism into discredit and set reforms in motion by necessity.[710] Germany's defeat in a war against Bonaparte would have to provoke a German revolution, which would however sweep away Bonaparte himself;[711] revolutionary convulsions in the defeated country are also expected from the defeat of France or Austria in the Italian War.[712] But even if Engels established the practical commandment for the revolutionaries of belligerent countries that "those who suffer a defeat have the possibility and the duty to carry out the revolution",[713] one would be exaggerating if one wanted to see in this an early formulation of what has been called "revolutionary defeatism" since the First World War. For here it is still said that the defeat should be utilized for the sparking of the revolution—and not that the defeat of one's own nation in war should be fundamentally striven for.

At the beginning we said that Marx and Engels at the time of the initially victorious revolutions of 1848 grasped the relationship of war and revolution not from the war, but from the revolution. The revolution, which is a primarily domestic political event, i.e., breaks out under the eventual influence of foreign examples indeed, but nevertheless without the triggering effect of an interstate war, seeks its consolidation in its expansion, by weakening the counter-revolution internationally through war against counter-revolutionary states, and thus protecting itself better within its own borders, partly by welding together its own forces internally through the warlike effort and pressing to highest political achievements. This

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[709] Letter to Lassalle dated May 18, 1859 = MEW, 29, 605.
[710] Engels, *Die auswärtige Politik des russischen Zarismus*, MEW, 22, 37.
[711] Engels, *German Resources for War*, *NYDT* Mar. 12, 1859 = CW, 16, 181 f.
[712] Marx, *A Prussian View of the War*, *NYDT* June 10, 1859 = CW, 16, 341.
[713] Letter to Bonnier dated Oct. 24, 1892 = MEW, 38, 503.

revolutionary war seemed possible and desirable to Marx and Engels in 1848 in two theaters. In the German theater, the war was to serve not only the revolutionary transformation of society, but simultaneously the realization of national unity, since the former obviously could not thrive on the soil of small-statehood: "We want Germany's unity, but only from the fragmentation of the great German monarchies can the elements for this unity separate out. Only in the storm of war and revolution will they be welded together".[714] This storm could e.g. be unleashed by the Danish war, "the first revolutionary war that Germany wages".[715] The "slumbering German movement" needed precisely such a war, "which puts 'the fatherland in danger' and saves it precisely by making the victory of Germany dependent on the victory of democracy".[716] The Danish war seemed incidentally to sharpen the conflict of German democracy not only with Prussia, which according to Engels proceeded not decisively enough, indeed treacherously and should "merge" into Germany during this war, but also with Russia, which stood on the Danish side. The conflict with Russia, however, suggested a restoration of Poland, which would represent a sensitive blow against Tsarism and was therefore regarded as an elementary duty and point of honor for the German revolutionary democracy. Especially in the war with arch-reactionary Russia, the "unification of Germany" and the "establishment of democracy" were to become identical tasks;[717] the effort to overcome foreign reaction was only the reverse side of the effort to eliminate the domestic one: "Only the war with Russia is a war of revolutionary Germany, a war in which it... can defeat its own autocrats".[718]

The second theater of revolutionary war is much broader, it encompasses all of Europe and—since Europe rules the world above all through England and therefore "every European war in which England is involved is a world war"—practically the whole world. The expected German revolutionary war thus forms part of a "European war" or "world war," which will be the "first consequence" of the victorious workers' revolution in France. The victory of the revolution in the heart of Europe acquires *eo ipso* first-rate international significance, everything groups itself in two hostile camps and the armies are "spewed out of the interior of the countries to and across the borders".[719] In this war, which sweeps everyone away in its vortex and binds the fate of one nation to the fate of the other, every local conflict transforms into a part or an

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[714] *Drohung der Gervinus-Zeitung*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* June 25, 1848 = MEW, 5, 105.
[715] Engels, *Der dänisch-preußische Waffenstillstand*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Sept. 10, 1848 = MEW, 5, 393.
[716] *Ibid.*, 397.
[717] Engels, *Die Polendebatte in Frankfurt*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Aug. 20, 1848 = MEW, 5, 334.
[718] *Die auswärtige deutsche Politik*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* July 12, 1848 = MEW, 5, 202.
[719] Marx, *Sieg der Konterrevolution in Wien*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Nov. 7, 1848 = MEW, 5, 457; *Die revolutionäre Bewegung*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Jan. 1, 1849 = MEW, 6, 150.

aspect of the great and decisive one,[720] while simultaneously the not yet revolutionized zones are "hurled ever deeper into the revolution by the war itself".[721] The narrower national interests and loyalties then lose their meaning, there can be "no question of them at all where the freedom or oppression, the weal or woe of all Europe is concerned"[722] and where it is expected that the revolutionary armies will "celebrate their festival of fraternization on the battlefield".[723] This expansion of the war into a European or world war lies in the nature of the revolution and its goals themselves. Every partial uprising and every reform must ultimately fail as long as the revolution has not defeated its enemies internationally, i.e., in a world war.[724] The "task of the worker" is "solved nowhere within the national walls," and the solution on the international level can only be achieved if the stronghold of international capitalism, England dominating the world market, falls into the hands of the proletariat through the world war.[725]

The consolation of Marx and Engels for the defeat of the more or less endogenous revolutions of 1848 consisted during the 1850s and 1860s in the expectation of *exogenous* revolutions, namely of such which would be called forth primarily by external events, specifically by a great war between the European powers. On the eve of the Crimean War, the prognosis is repeatedly and confidently set up that every general European war must entail a revolution,[726] especially if it is waged against Russia and above all if it sweeps the British popular masses along.[727] But for the war to become the signal of revolution and thus overturn all calculations regarding the balance of power,[728] it must not be a local war and no "simulacrum" of a war,[729] but must be a real war in grand style, somewhat like the Napoleonic wars.[730] Marx and Engels make no secret of their disappointment that the Crimean War remained a limited war, and attribute this to the will of the rulers to keep the conflict within manageable limits in view of the foreseeable revolutionary consequences of a great war. The English and French bourgeoisie had moreover financial reservations against intensive warfare, and even the proletariat finally showed little enthusiasm

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[720] Engels, *Ungarn*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* May 19, 1849 = MEW, 6, 515: "Through the fact that the Hungarian war has become European, it enters into interaction with all other moments of the European movement".
[721] Engels, *Der Krieg in Italien und Ungarn*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Mar. 28, 1849 = MEW, 6, 382.
[722] Engels, *Die revolutionäre Erhebung in der Pfalz und in Baden*, *Der Bote für Stadt und Land* June 3, 1849 = MEW, 6, 525 f.
[723] Engels, *loc. cit.* (Note 204).
[724] Marx, *Lohnarbeit und Kapital*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Apr. 5, 1849 = MEW, 6, 397 f.
[725] Marx, *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, III = MEW, 7, 79.
[726] Marx, *Affairs in Holland etc.*, *NYDT* June 9, 1853 = CW, 12, 106; *The Turkish War Question etc.*, *NYDT* July 20, 1853 = CW, 12, 174.
[727] Marx, *Affairs Continental and English*, *NYDT* Sept. 5, 1853 = CW, 12, 282.
[728] Engels, *The European War*, *NYDT* Feb. 2, 1854 = CW, 12, 557 f.
[729] Thus Engels in a letter to H. J. Lincoln dated Mar. 30, 1854 = MEW, 28, 601.
[730] Engels, *The Military Power of Russia*, *NYDT* Oct. 31, 1854 = CW, 13, 504.

for it; only the peasants in France and a part of the agricultural laborers in England saw in the war a possibility to escape their difficult social situation.[731] Under these circumstances Palmerston had no difficulties in having the war waged as a "sham war" and shifting the theater of war to the Crimea, which Bonaparte gladly accepted.[732] So finally the preservation of the balance of power became the goal of the war, the expected struggle between freedom and despotism failed to materialize.[733] Marx and Engels insisted of course further on the view that an "inexorable dialectic" transformed this local war into a great one, only they had to realize now "that other powers must step onto the scene to wage the war against Russia".[734] These powers, however, were slumbering at the time, and they were supposed to be awakened precisely by a great war: the practical hopelessness of the revolutionary cause made the vicious circle in argumentation unavoidable too.

Although the European wars from 1853 to 1870 evoked no (victorious) revolution in the warring countries, they nevertheless contributed from the view of Marx and Engels to creating situations in which social modernization in general and the labor movement in particular could unfold better; at least an indirect promotion of the revolution by the war was thus not lacking. Not long after the end of the Crimean War Marx opined, this had "accelerated the present turn of things in Russia";[735] the weakened Tsar saw himself forced after the defeat and national humiliation to give the serfs the freedom promised during the war, whereby it was confirmed anew that the legitimate governments of Europe could decide on the abolition of serfdom only under the pressure of revolution or war.[736] Engels, too, traced the beginnings of capitalist development in Russia in a retrospective among other things back to the effects of the Crimean War.[737] Particularly important and positive for the pan-European development of the revolutionary labor movement proved, however, the consequences of the Prussian-French war—all the more so as the only revolution that ever emerged from one of the mentioned European wars, namely the Paris Commune, was totally defeated. Considering the joint actions of the victorious Prussian and the defeated French army for the suppression of the Commune, Marx showed himself convinced that now the class antagonism was stronger than the national antagonism and that the "national war," the "highest heroic flight of which the old society was still capable," had become "pure government swindle," which had no other purpose anymore than "to postpone the class struggle".[738] And yet again not the revolutionary labor movement itself, but

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[731] Marx, *Prospect in France and England*, *NYDT* Apr. 27, 1855 = CW, 14, 144 f.
[732] Engels, *Die Rolle der Gewalt*..., MEW, 21, 412 f. note.
[733] Marx, *Reorganisation of the British War Administration*, *NYDT* July 24, 1854 = CW, 13, 228.
[734] Marx-Engels, *Der lokale Krieg etc.*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung*, June 23, 1855 = MEW, 11, 311.
[735] Letter to Engels dated Oct. 8, 1858 = MEW, 29, 360.
[736] Marx, *The Question of the Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*, *NYDT* Oct. 19, 1858 = CW, 16, 53, 52.
[737] Letter to Danielson dated Oct. 17, 1893 = MEW, 39, 148; cf. above Notes 194 and 101.
[738] *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, III = MEW, 17, 360 f.

the national war turned out to be the driving force of historical development at the given moment. The national war created those facts from which the European labor movement now had to start, according to which it had to direct its activity henceforth. The war of 1870 and the German unity achieved thereby had indeed ushered in "a new world-historical epoch".[739] For the German working class the new turn of things meant that it had to centralize corresponding to the centralization of state power and thereby unfold its whole strength: "this war has shifted the center of gravity of the continental labor movement from France to Germany".[740]

That war can lead to revolution lies of course not always and not necessarily in the intentions of the belligerents, but in a logic of the situation and development independent of these intentions. Incidentally, the intention of a government that decides for war consists not infrequently in distracting from domestic political difficulties, thus averting revolutionary dangers. Already in 1848 Marx and Engels thought that the Danish war, to which they wanted to give a democratic and democratizing turn, was abused by the Prussian government as a mere "conductor for the patriotic surplus energy of the German youth".[741] Also a war against the independence of Italy or Poland would have been at that time, when the Germans themselves were struggling for their freedom, a "Machiavellian trick" to "paralyze democratic energy..., to dig a drainage canal for the revolutionary glowing lava".[742] Since then Marx and Engels have repeatedly presented the internal political or revolutionary pressure as the cause of the war desire of reactionary governments, and they did so above all with regard to Tsarist Russia and Bonapartist France. When after the defeat in the Crimean War a reform movement and at the same time a fermentation set in in Russia which seemed to get out of control, Marx wrote, the Russian government now regarded the war as "the only means of shifting off the impending revolution".[743] Engels, too, represented at the time of the Russo-Turkish War the view that the Russian government, like all governments facing a violent resistance of the people, had only one way out, namely war outwards;[744] he said the same in the 1880s, when increasing pressure from revolutionary-terrorist forces was exerted on the Tsarist regime.[745] Even greater seemed the inclination of the Bonapartist regime to war from the beginning, partly because of the rich revolutionary traditions of France, which could revive at any time, and partly because of the

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[739] Thus Marx and Engels in the letter to the Committee of the Social Democratic Workers' Party dated August 1870 = MEW, 17, 269.
[740] *Ibid.*, 270; cf. Marx's letter to Engels dated July 20, 1870 = MEW, 33, 5.
[741] Marx, *Die Bourgeoisie und die Konterrevolution*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Dec. 10, 1848 = MEW, 6, 103.
[742] *Die auswärtige deutsche Politik...*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* July 12, 1848 = MEW, 5, 202.
[743] *Events in Syria etc.*, *NYDT* Aug. 11, 1860 = CW, 17, 429; cf. already *The War Prospect in Europe*, *NYDT* Jan. 31, 1859 = CW, 16, 156.
[744] *Die europäischen Arbeiter im Jahre 1877*, MEW, 19, 136.
[745] Letter to Zasulich dated Mar. 6, 1884 = MEW, 36, 120; Letter to Lafargue dated Oct. 25/26, 1886 = MEW, 36, 563.

special role of the army in it.[746] Already during the Crimean War Marx was convinced that Bonaparte had "no other choice" than revolution in the interior or war outwards.[747] On the eve of the war of 1859 he repeated this not further substantiated assessment of the situation,[748] and simultaneously relativized it by explaining the coming war partly as a consequence of the Bonapartist endeavor to satisfy the army materially and morally.[749] With these somewhat sweeping judgments it remained largely unclear how strong the actual revolutionary danger for Bonaparte was and what influence his special problems with the army or with the bourgeoisie[750] had on his war policy. The statement that the intensity of internal tensions must procure a vent in war[751] was not specific enough as an explanation—all the more so as Bonaparte was even considered capable of making war merely for the sake of raising a loan.[752]

The possibility that a revolution could spring from a war between inherently reactionary governments proves already the potential asymmetry between objective function of war and subjective intentions of the belligerents. One must therefore distinguish wars according to their objective function or according to their subjective objective; only in this latter case does the distinction between *just* and *unjust* wars receive its full meaning, whereby just are those which are waged by revolutionary or at least progressive historical-political subjects for the attainment of corresponding goals. Marx and Engels did not go into detail on the distinction between just and unjust wars, given its importance for Lenin and later Marxist-Leninist theory it must nevertheless be noted that their work contains many a hint at it. Thus Marx designated the "war of the enslaved against their oppressors" as the "only rightful war in history"[753] and understood by it class struggles and civil wars, into the same category, however, wars between oppressing and oppressed nations could also be classified without difficulty. For Marx e.g. the British war

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[746] See above Sect. 3, 187 ff.

[747] *Parliamentary Debates etc.*, *NYDT* Mar. 13, 1854 = CW, 13, 33. Fifteen months earlier Marx believed that Bonaparte would have to make war for financial reasons, see the letter to Engels dated Dec. 3, 1852 = MEW, 28, 202.

[748] *Affairs in Prussia*, *NYDT* Dec. 27, 1858 = CW, 16, 128: "The only prospect of delaying the revolution in France is a European war".

[749] *The Money Panic in Europe*, *NYDT* Feb. 1, 1859 = CW, 16, 164. Engels later kept these two causes apart, although he assumed their combined effect: "...the necessity to employ the army and to divert the revolutionary currents outwardly produced the wars etc.", Introduction to *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich* (1895), MEW, 7, 517.

[750] Engels referred to the "fermenting discomfort of the bourgeoisie" when he thought that a war for the Rhine frontier would give the revolutionary masses of France national employment and the bourgeois the prospect of a new market; *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 227.

[751] Marx, *The French Disarmament*, *NYDT* Aug. 12, 1859 = CW, 16, 443; *Spree und Mincio*, *Das Volk* June 25, 1859 = MEW, 13, 391.

[752] See Marx's letter to Philips dated Nov. 20, 1864 = MEW, 31, 431.

[753] *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, MEW, 17, 358.

against China was a "most unrighteous war",[754] and Engels defended himself already in 1848 against the equation of progressive movements with "reactionary wars," like that e.g. to which Italy owed its subjugation under Austria.[755] The distinction between just and unjust war as well as the identification of the former with (civil) war in the interest of the revolution stood thus more or less firm, but with that the question was not yet answered to what extent the just war had to remain strategically defensive or could also be offensive. As we shall still see, Lenin separated the two questions from one another, thus judged the just character of a war independently of whether the war in question was strategically offensive or defensive.[756] In Marx and Engels this question still remains in the dark, although one can assume that they would declare themselves in agreement with Lenin's position due to their aversion to moralisms that could harm the cause of the revolution. Engels expresses himself on this only incidentally and ambiguously. When the hope for a transition of the European revolution into a European war against the still intact bastions of reaction was still alive, he went so far as to dream of a "happy offensive" of the revolutionary armies against Russia.[757] In 1882, however, he wrote: "the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by doing so. With which of course defensive wars of various kinds are by no means excluded".[758] With that he repeated a conviction which he had expressed already before the decisive political experiences of 1848, when he namely painted the ideal of a communist society: the thesis that communist society could wage only defensive wars[759] resulted as it were automatically from the definition of a classless society in which there should be precisely no class that would have to promise itself any particular gains from an offensive war. But would not the annihilation of the remaining class societies be a collective gain?

In the two cases discussed above, in which war is considered as continuation and expansion of the revolution or revolution as result of war, the attitude of Marx and Engels towards war remains positive. It becomes negative not out of any pacifist sympathies, but out of the tactical consideration that this or that war could impair the development of the revolutionary movement. This consideration gains more and more ground after the disappointments with the Crimean War, and already in 1859 Marx expresses strong doubts against the view that good was to be expected from a war in Italy. in his debate with Lassalle regarding this, he opined: "The war would of course lead to serious results and eventually certainly to revolutionary ones. Initially, however, it maintains Bonapartism in France, pushes back the internal movement in

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[754] *English Atrocities in China*, *NYDT* Apr. 10, 1857 = CW, 15, 234.
[755] *Ein Wort an die Riforma*, *Deutsche Brüsseler-Zeitung* Feb. 24, 1848 = MEW, 4, 526.
[756] See below Chap. VI, Sect. 3, p. 269 ff.
[757] Letter to Weydemeyer dated Apr. 12, 1853 = MEW, 28, 577.
[758] Letter to Kautsky dated Sept. 12, 1882 = MEW, 35, 358.
[759] Speech in Elberfeld dated Feb. 8, 1845 = MEW, 2, 543.

England and Russia, restores the pettiest nationality passions in Germany etc. and will therefore... initially act counter-revolutionary on all sides".[760] Around the same time he struck highly unusual tones and lamented the general belief in the false axiom "si vis pacem para bellum," which had "called all Europe to arms and generated a mercenary fanaticism".[761] That did not prevent him, of course, from expressing the expectation after the outbreak of the war that the conflict would not remain localized, but would transform in its course into a "general revolutionary conflagration of continental Europe";[762] he also traced the cessation of hostilities back to Bonaparte's fear of the danger of a revolution.[763] Despite this temporary return to the ideas and hopes that had arisen in the time of the Crimean War, Marx and Engels remained henceforth with the view that a new war would harm the revolutionary movement rather than benefit it. Without the safety valve of a war, Bonaparte's position in the interior would become weaker and the opposition in Prussia stronger.[764] After the founding of the Reich and under the impression of the continuous and, as it seemed, unstoppable rise of German Social Democracy, this opposition to war is justified differently. It is feared namely that the progress of socialism would be pushed back by nationalistic feelings and sentiments, which in the event of a war would have to dominate the scene. The European war, wrote Engels in 1879, "buries also the present German party under the inevitable struggle of each people for national existence".[765] It would "inflame chauvinism for years to come"[766] and place the socialists before a fatal dilemma, namely that they "must either join in the patriotic howl or provoke an outburst of rage against themselves".[767] Since Marx and Engels believed to stand on the side of an inevitable historical development, they were convinced that even a war with present negative effects would finally have to favor this development, yet in such a case a "useless exhaustion of forces," "loss of time" and "sacrifices" were to be accepted.[768] Should the war break out nevertheless, it would certainly be the last and bring about the "complete collapse of the class state";[769] especially against Russia it should be waged "with all revolutionary means".[770]

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[760] Letter to Lassalle dated Feb. 4, 1859 = MEW, 29, 577. As Bernstein correctly remarks, the dispute with Lassalle was of a rather tactical nature, since Lassalle too considered the question of war in principle from the point of view of the probable consequences for the labor movement (*Die Klassiker*, 664 f.).

[761] *Invasion*, *Das Volk* July 30, 1859 = MEW, 13, 444.

[762] *A Prussian View of the War*, *NYDT* June 10, 1859 = CW, 16, 341.

[763] *The Peace*, *NYDT* July 28, 1859 = CW, 16, 413.

[764] See Marx's letters to Philips dated Mar. 29, 1864 (= MEW, 30, 650) and to Engels dated June 7, 1867 (= MEW, 31, 299).

[765] Letter to Bebel dated Dec. 16, 1879 = MEW, 34, 431.

[766] Letter to Bebel dated Dec. 22, 1882 = MEW, 35, 416.

[767] Letter to Bernstein dated Feb. 22/25, 1882 = MEW, 35, 283.

[768] See Marx's letter to Danielson dated Sept. 12, 1880 (= MEW, 34, 464) and Engels' letters to Lafargue dated Oct. 25/26, 1886 (= MEW, 36, 563) and to Niewenhuis dated Jan. 11, 1887 (= MEW, 36, 592).

[769] See Engels' letter to Bebel dated Nov. 17, 1885 = MEW, 36, 391.

[770] See Engels' letter to Bebel dated Oct. 24/26, 1891 = MEW, 38, 188.

The same confidence about the outcome of the "tragedy" Engels displayed when he tried to describe the immense catastrophes that a new war would cause, which could only be a world war "of an extent and violence hitherto never suspected"; despite millions of dead, despite famine, epidemics, general savagery and bankruptcy, finally the old states and crowns would collapse and the proletarians win.[771] Already since the time of the Italian War Marx and Engels had made the observation that a war could now concentrate within a few weeks the actions, but also the losses in life and money of several and longer earlier wars.[772] With the Prussian-French war, however, a true turning point seemed to have occurred, which would have to lead to the self-cancellation of militarism and thus to the quasi-automatic elimination of the war danger. Armaments grew more and more, defense became stronger and attack weaker, and the large size of the armies made a reduction of expenditures indispensable.[773] If one wanted to drive the system of militarism "to the extreme tip," it would collapse "from within, by its own necessary consequences".[774] The prospect of financial ruin as a result of the military burden and of a "general war of annihilation" with uncertain outcome were the two foreseeable outgrowths of militarism, from which it would perish itself; added to this was the unavoidable transformation of the princely army into a people's army, which could possibly "refuse service".[775] In the double perspective of the immeasurable catastrophe as a result of the growth of militarism and the abolition of militarism as a result of its growth, peace appeared as the better choice for the labor movement. Marx and Engels were not the only ones who for the reasons just mentioned considered a great war improbable or at least less probable than before; this was rather the general opinion in Europe between 1870 and 1914.[776] They shared this opinion because they had adopted certain aspects of the liberal understanding of the nature of economizing and the functioning of a modern economy[777]—only a few years after their death, however, Marxist theorists like Luxemburg and Lenin advanced the thesis that the capitalist economy could overcome its own contradictions at least temporarily only through militarism and war.

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[771] Introduction to Borkheim's pamphlet *Zur Erinnerung an die deutschen Mordspatrioten*, MEW, 21, 350 f.
[772] *What Has Italy Gained?*, *NYDT* July 27, 1859 = CW, 16, 407.
[773] Engels, *Wie die Preußen zu schlagen sind*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Sept. 17, 1870 = MEW, 17, 108.
[774] Engels, *Offiziöses Kriegsgeheul*, *Der Volksstaat* Apr. 23, 1875 = MEW, 18, 583.
[775] Engels, *Kann Europa abrüsten?*, MEW, 22, 371; Interview with *Le Figaro* dated May 8, 1893 = MEW, 22, 540; Introduction to *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich* = MEW, 7, 518; *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 158.
[776] See above Excursus B, p. 118, 120, 128.
[777] Cf. above Sect. 2 in this Chapter, p. 180 f.

5. Strategy and Tactics

When Engels asserted in his polemic against Dühring that strategy and tactics do not spring from the head of genius commanders, but are conditioned primarily by the respective state of technology, and specifically weapons technology, he underpinned his thesis with a sketch of the development of modern tactics since the invention of firearms. He described how the relationship between pikemen and musketeers within the infantry changed parallel with the perfection of firearms (i.e., with the introduction of the flintlock musket with bayonet and loading with ready-made cartridges) and what consequences this had for the battle order, which arrived from the deployment of pikemen in deep masses, similar to the ancient Greek phalanx, to the long thin lines.[778] After pointing to the importance of the appearance of scattered, very mobile shooters during the American War of Independence, he explained the formation of the column as a combination of the new massive human material with the advances in the field of armament (curved stock in the infantry rifle and lighter mounting of guns) and finally he recalled the effects of the breech-loader in the Prussian-French war, when the company column was replaced by the dense skirmisher swarms with simultaneous use of the double time.[779] Although Engels does not say it openly, he admits indirectly that changes in weapons technology alone cannot fully explain the changes in tactics in all their aspects. He introduces tacitly an additional variable, which he calls human material. Linear tactics corresponded to the human material of the princely armies, in which the foot soldiers consisted of the "most degenerate elements of society," i.e., soldiers who fought reluctantly and had to be kept in order with strict means so as not to desert; skirmishing arose where the human material consisted of rebels who fought for their own interests in dissolved, rapidly moving shooter swarms; and the column absorbed the human material that the *levée en masse* made available.[780] If one wants to explain the development of tactics primarily with regard to the respective human material in the widest historical and sociological sense of the word, one would have to recall Clausewitz's remark that the effects of the French Revolution were to be sought "much less in new means and views on warfare, than in the completely changed statecraft and administration, in the character of the government, in the condition of the people etc."[781] Engels seems to approach a similar view when he designates the introduction of skirmishing into modern tactics not as result, but as cause for the progress of armament, only to add, alluding to Hegel's well-known sentence: "In the nineteenth century, whenever a demand for a thing arises, and that demand be justified by the circumstances of the case, it is sure to be supplied".[782] If this line of interpretation were

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[778] *Taktik der Infanterie aus den materiellen Ursachen abgeleitet*, MEW, 20, 597 f.
[779] *Ibid.*, 599 f., 602 f.
[780] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 156 f.
[781] *Vom Kriege*, VIII, 6B = 997.
[782] *The History of the Rifle*, CW, 18, 434 f.

carried through consistently, it would have to come at least partially into contradiction with the argumentation mobilized against Dühring. An ambiguity thus adheres to Engels' attempt at explanation, and ambiguously he expresses himself also about the future of tactics insofar as this is connected with the development of weapons technology. For in one place he thinks that the colossal revolution, which started in the entire field of firearms with the rifle, is "even now far from its conclusion",[783] in another (somewhat later) he considers the existing weapons to be so perfected that "a new progress of any revolutionary influence is no longer possible".[784]

Engels calls scientific warfare "the work of western civilization"[785] and regards Napoleon as the one who "completely developed" modern art of war—and indeed so completely that until the occurrence of substantially new social conditions nothing else remains "but to imitate Napoleon," as far as this is possible.[786] This orientation on the model of Napoleonic art of war determined the strategic and tactical thinking of Marx and Engels from the beginning and experienced no noteworthy change later either. Critical remarks about Napoleon as a strategist are heard only rarely, and then they refer again not to his principles, but to certain actions;[787] otherwise even his views on detailed questions are considered irrefutable and binding.[788] After Napoleon and as a result of the long peace, the art of war seemed to have "decreased in the same measure as war material had increased thanks to industrial development".[789] Napoleon's greatness rested, however, on concrete social prerequisites which made possible, indeed required, the appearance of an army of a new type.[790] The Corsican's achievement consisted initially in transforming mass tactics, which had arisen rather instinctively from the chaotic state of a revolutionary army relying solely on numerical superiority,[791] into a system that functioned in a disciplined manner. Later, the concentration of forces, the decisive action and at the same time the flexibility characterizing his strategic enterprises reflected a clear and accurate general policy—just as conversely indecisive strategic action betrays a vacillating policy.[792] The fusion of

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[783] *On Rifled Cannon, I*, *NYDT* Apr. 7, 1860 = CW, 17, 354 f.
[784] *Anti-Dühring*, MEW, 20, 158; in 1893 he nevertheless spoke once again of the "uninterrupted revolutionizing of the technical basis of warfare" (*Kann Europa abrüsten?*, MEW, 22, 380).
[785] *The Battle of Inkerman*, *NYDT* Dec. 14, 1854 = CW, 13, 533.
[786] *Bedingungen und Aussichten eines Krieges der Heiligen Allianz...*, MEW, 7, 474.
[787] See e.g. Engels, *Cavalry*, CW, 18, 313 (on Napoleon's failed experiments with ever new column formations).
[788] See e.g. Engels' letter to Weydemeyer dated Apr. 12, 1853 = MEW, 28, 577: "Germany and Italy allow no other lines of operation than those established by Napoleon". To be sure, Engels could not say the same with regard to Russia.
[789] Marx, *Rückblicke*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Jan. 4, 1855 = MEW, 10, 591.
[790] See above Note 116.
[791] Engels, *Bedingungen und Aussichten...*, MEW, 7, 473.
[792] Marx-Engels, *Kritik der französischen Kriegführung*, *Neue Oder-Zeitung* Mar. 20, 1855 = MEW, 11, esp. 129-131.

all these factors within Napoleonic art of war put an abrupt and irrevocable end to the "antediluvian times of pompous and do-nothing warfare",[793] to the "spirit of schematism and pedantry".[794] Marx and Engels mock "the old so-called 'maneuver generals', who excused their anxious avoidance of any tactical decision by saying that they forced the enemy to abandon his positions through strategic envelopment".[795] Napoleonic art of war expanded the strategic horizon just as it expanded the field of operations, which in the 18th century was limited to a province in which maneuvers revolved for months around individual positions or fortresses, while "today in every war the terrain configuration of entire countries comes into consideration".[796]

Marx and Engels thus accept the principles of Napoleonic art of war as self-evident military-theoretical truths and use them as the yardstick of their own criticism of military operations. For "sham war" and indecisiveness they have nothing left, they want "rapid concentrations, forced marches, stratagems and outflankings of the largest kind, changing bases and lines of operation".[797] Above all they value the rapidity of troop movement, which favors the bold blow and can by itself make good the numerical superiority of the enemy by enabling an attack before the enemy finds time to concentrate his forces.[798] High mobility forms moreover a prerequisite for seizing and maintaining the initiative, in which a proof of superiority already lies. For it keeps the morale of the troop high under all circumstances, even in case of a setback, as long as one remains capable "to give the impulse to the enemy instead of receiving it from him".[799] The initiative in war can thus assume many forms depending on the situation, although it obviously culminates in the decision to seek a great battle, and then in the ability to force the enemy to fight it under circumstances not favorable to him. To the creation of such circumstances belongs among other things a long preparatory skirmishing, until one succeeds in dealing the enemy the decisive blow at decisive places and with decisive troop masses; the attempt to deal this blow directly and abruptly testifies to a great lack of strategic art.[800] In general, four main phases can be distinguished in a successful attack tactic: a) the enemy is deceived by maneuvers; b) own forces are concentrated at the decisive places; c) the enemy is

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[793] Engels, *The War - No Progress*, *NYDT* May 27, 1859 = CW, 16, 327.
[794] Engels, *Bedingungen und Aussichten...*, MEW, 7, 479.
[795] Marx-Engels, *Die Lage auf dem amerikanischen Kriegsschauplatze*, *Die Presse* May 20, 1862 = MEW, 15, 505. Engels also cites Napoleon's ironic verdict on Bülow, see *The War*, *NYDT* May 23, 1859 = CW, 16, 319.
[796] Engels, *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 237.
[797] Engels, *The European War*, *NYDT* Feb. 17, 1855 = CW, 13, 613.
[798] Engels, *The Battle of Inkerman*, *NYDT* Dec. 14, 1854 = CW, 13, 531; *Progress of the Turkish War*, *NYDT* Dec. 7, 1853 = CW, 12, 475.
[799] Engels, *The Siege of Silistria*, *NYDT* June 26, 1854 = CW, 13, 234.
[800] Engels, *The Battle of the Chernaya*, *NYDT* Sept. 14, 1855 = CW, 14, 511 f.

surprised at his weakest point; d) the enemy forces are split in order to be smashed piecemeal.[801] The great tactical principle which since its discovery by Epaminondas has decided almost all battles is accordingly the unequal distribution of the troop on the front line, so that the decisive attack can be concentrated on a decisive point.[802]

The concentration of one's own and the splitting of the enemy forces constitutes thus the supreme strategic and tactical commandment, just as conversely the splitting of one's own forces usually has a disastrous effect. "Concentration is the secret of strategy," wrote Marx when he denounced the main military error of the British in the suppression of the Indian uprising: instead of holding their forces together with regard to the political and strategic main goal, the British had scattered in all directions and acted without an overall plan—an error which was all the more unforgivable due to their numerical weakness.[803] Engels likewise reminded the Austrians of the advantages of the concentration of forces when he recommended them to beat the Italian and the French army separately, i.e., before their unification, with all troops available.[804] Although our two civilian strategists were aware of the peculiarity of American warfare in past and present,[805] they based their analysis of the operations in the American Civil War on the same strategic axioms. In the warfare of the secessionists they criticized the dispersion of forces, namely in the attempt to hold everything occupied. Instead of e.g. defending Kentucky by "a single entrenched strong central camp, destined for battlefield for a decisive encounter and held by the main army masses," they established three camps, which were then attacked successfully one after another by the enemy, so that the subsequent battle had to be delivered on open field and under unfavorable circumstances.[806] But the Unionists too played with strategically dangerous thoughts, as e.g. the Anaconda encirclement plan was one. According to it, an immense line of armies was to embrace and strangle the secessionist states. Nevertheless, the defender could "cut the Anaconda in two by striking at a point where he concentrates superior forces; then the pieces of the 'Anaconda' will be chopped up one after another." In the South too, despite the lack of a great center (like e.g. Paris in France) on which the attacker could concentrate his decisive forces and blows, it would be possible and advisable

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[801] Engels, *The Russians in Turkey*, *NYDT* Oct. 17, 1853 = CW, 12, 336. The victory becomes complete through an active pursuit, see e.g. Engels, *Der Rückzug der Österreicher an den Mincio*, *Das Volk* June 25, 1859 = MEW, 13, 394.

[802] Engels, *Infantry*, CW, 18, 342.

[803] Marx, *The Revolt in India*, *NYDT* Oct. 13, 1857 and Oct. 23, 1857 = CW, 15, 366-8, 372.

[804] *The War*, *NYDT* May 23, 1859 = CW, 16, 315; *Prospects of the War*, *NYDT* May 12, 1859 = CW, 16, 299; *The War - No Progress*, *NYDT* May 27, 1859 = CW, 16, 329; *Fighting at Last*, *NYDT* May 6, 1854 = CW, 16, 334.

[805] Thus Marx wrote to Engels on the occasion of his reading of Ripley's book on the Mexican War: "The enormous spaces on which the action takes place, and the small number of men with whom it is carried out (thereby more volunteers than regular army), give it 'American' originality" (Letter dated Nov. 30, 1854 = MEW, 28, 414).

[806] Marx-Engels, *Der amerikanische Bürgerkrieg*, *Die Presse* Mar. 26, 1862 = MEW, 15, 489.

to apply this orthodox strategy; of central importance would then be the occupation of Georgia and control over the railways.[807] — Finally, in this context, Engels' criticism of the all-too-slow concentration of the French troops in 1870 should be recalled:[808] "Like Benedek, Louis-Napoleon let it happen that one army corps after another was beaten individually by numerically superior troops or superior generalship".[809]

The importance Marx and Engels attributed to initiative and mobility makes it easy to guess how they stood on the question of offensive or defensive. They never doubted the superiority of the former and always recommended an offensive strategy of Napoleonic style when decisive successes were at stake.[810] The unconditional primacy of the offensive formed incidentally the great common denominator of strategy in war between states and the strategy of revolution: "But in revolution as in war it is always necessary to show a bold front to the enemy, and he

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[807] Marx-Engels, *Der amerikanische Bürgerkrieg*, *Die Presse* Mar. 27, 1862 = MEW, 15, 493 f.

[808] *Die preußischen Siege*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Aug. 8, 1870 = MEW, 17, 28.

[809] *Über den Krieg*, V, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Aug. 9, 1870 = MEW, 17, 34. The mention of Benedek at this point contains an allusion to the view held by Engels in 1866 that the Austrian commander could not have exploited the Prussians' errors. According to Engels, the Prussian campaign plan at the time violated "the two most important laws of strategy...: first, never to divide one's troops so that they cannot support each other, but to keep them closer together; and second, in the case of an advance on different roads, to effect the junction of the various columns at a point not within the enemy's reach". Only through their speed and decisiveness, to which were added the needle gun and high morale, had the Prussians made up for these errors of theirs (*Betrachtungen über den Krieg in Deutschland*, IV and V, *The Manchester Guardian* July 3, 1866 and July 6, 1866 = MEW, 16, 182, 187). As one can see, Engels understands Moltke's operations not as the realization of a new and independent strategic concept, but simply as a blameworthy deviation from the proven Napoleonic rules. When he found Moltke's operations "exemplary" in 1870 (Letter to Marx dated Aug. 15, 1870 = MEW, 33, 41), he did so out of the conviction that Moltke had "punctually, scrupulously and conscientiously followed the strategic rules discovered by Napoleon I" (*Das Reichs-Militärgesetz*, II, *Der Volksstaat* Mar. 11, 1874 = MEW, 18, 507). Engels, incidentally, was by no means alone in 1866 with his judgment and his assessment of the strategic situation. As v. d. Goltz recalled, even Moltke's first orders at that time provoked mistrust and the "adherents of Napoleonic strategy" subjected Moltke's invasion of Bohemia to "severe criticism"; Austria's victory was generally believed in (*Moltke*, 111, 123). On the question of whether Moltke's strategy formed a new and independent concept or a continuation of the Napoleonic one taking into account the meanwhile changed conditions, a very interesting debate was conducted around 1900. Schlichting tried to work out the essential difference between Moltke's and Napoleon's strategy (*Grundsätze*, II, esp. 91, 94; *Vermächtnis*, esp. 4 ff., 102 f.), and v. d. Goltz admitted this difference too, but he regarded the two strategies as "equally justified", since each of the two would correspond to "a certain preceding state of affairs" and could "not be applied arbitrarily" (*Kriegführung*, 101). Krauß believed on the contrary that Napoleon remained the "unsurpassed model" and Moltke had "created no new principles": "new was the form of operation conditioned by the times" (*Moltke*, 60 f.). Freytag-Loringhoven shared this view, but at the same time he argued that in "Napoleon's mode of warfare nowhere is a definite principle to be discovered" and that this was likewise a "system of expedients" (*Die Heerführung*, 4, cf. 53). In summary on this debate see Erfurth, *Vernichtungssieg*, 52 ff.

[810] Engels, *Chances of the Impending War*, *NYDT* Mar. 17, 1859 = CW, 16, 201; Marx, *Zu den Ereignissen in Nordamerika*, *Die Presse* Oct. 12, 1862 = MEW, 15, 552.

who attacks is at an advantage; and in revolution as in war it is absolutely necessary to stake everything on the decisive moment, whatever the odds may be".[811] Just like war, Engels believes, insurrection is an "art" and therefore "subject to certain rules, the neglect of which leads to the ruin of the party guilty of them." These rules are mainly two. First, "never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play." And second, "once you have entered upon the insurrectionary career, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising"; the opponent must be surprised, the initial successes used to obtain moral ascendancy and win over the vacillating elements; "in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!"[812]

This primacy of the offensive in war and revolution has obvious implications also for the character of a (successful) defensive warfare. Only that defensive can lead to the goal, i.e., to victory, which permits the transition to the offensive in a certain phase of operations; the worst kind of defensive is on the contrary the one conducted passively.[813] Precisely with reference to the principle that "no defensive is more effective than the active, offensively conducted one," Engels opined in 1859 that an abandonment of the Mincio line need not entail catastrophic consequences for Germany, even if it were initially forced into the defensive;[814] he also recommended an actively offensive defense of Paris in 1870/71.[815] Offensive military operations can thus characterize a warfare whose political goal remains basically defensive; defensive war and defensive military operation must not be confused with one another.[816] In this point a direct influence by Clausewitz appears possible, it must at any rate be considered certain when Engels in one place calls the defense the stronger form and thereby thinks precisely of the transition from defense to attack shortly after the culmination and subsequent ebb of the hostile attack. The view of the attack as the stronger form, he believes, should be revised, although great commanders from Epaminondas to Napoleon were "attacking generals," which created a false impression; "the history of the greatest battles in the world seems to show that, where the attacked army has solid and obstinate endurance sufficient to make it to resist, unbroken, until

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[811] Engels, *Revolution und Konterrevolution in Deutschland*, XIII = MEW, 8, 77.
[812] *Ibid.*, XVI = MEW, 8, 95. Cf. Engels, *Garibaldi in Sicily*, *NYDT* June 22, 1860 = CW, 17, 388: "A bold offensive was the only system of tactics permitted to a revolution".
[813] Marx, *English and French War Plans etc.*, *NYDT* 18.
[814] *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 247, 265.
[815] *Über den Krieg*, XXII, XXIV, XXXIII, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Oct. 11, 1870, Oct. 21, 1870, Jan. 6, 1871 = MEW, 17, 131, 144, 225.
[816] See the letter from Marx to Engels dated Aug. 17, 1870 = MEW, 33, 44.

the fire of the assailants begins to die out, and exhaustion and reaction to succeed, and can then assume the offensive and attack in its turn, the defensive action is the safest".[817]

The persistence of the strategic and tactical thinking of Marx and Engels in the framework of Napoleonic art of war is also evidenced by their assessment of the role of individual branches of service within a modern army. It is recognized that artillery depends far more than infantry and cavalry on the general level of development of weapons technology and therefore forms an essentially scientific branch of service which cannot do without special knowledge, especially among officers.[818] Despite all progress in artillery technology, however, the main use of this weapon, apart from the bombardment of fortresses, consists still in opening the way for the attacking infantry.[819] The infantry is that weapon which decides battles; slight differences in the strength of cavalry or artillery "including mitrailleuses and other miracle-working machines" do not carry weight.[820] Although the emerging new possibilities of artillery are not exactly realistically assessed or ironically disparaged here, Marx and Engels did not lack awareness that the unfolding of industrial society had made means available to warfare which had to change its character compared to Napoleonic art of war. Clear was first of all that the industrial potential of a belligerent now assumes an unprecedented significance, even if the connection between social organization and possibilities of warfare had been no secret at the latest since the French Revolution. As a decisive factor for the organization, equipment and transport of modern mass armies, the industrial potential was recognized by Marx and Engels above all during the American Civil War; the North had to carry off the victory in a longer war already because of its industrial superiority, while the South, which was readier for attack "thanks to the mass of adventurous idlers it harbors," could win only through a rapid and bold action at the very

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[817] *Attack*, CW, 18, 35. Also Engels' conviction that in mountain warfare the attack is decidedly superior to the defense in strategic terms (*Mountain Warfare in the Past and Present*, *NYDT* Jan. 27, 1857 = CW, 15, 169 f.), was likely taken directly from Clausewitz, who already advocated it in his early writings (*Strategie*, 58-60), only to explain it in more detail in the main work (VI, 15-17; VII, 11); Clausewitz, admittedly, ascribed its authorship to Archduke Charles (*Die Feldzüge von 1799*, *Werke*, V, 29). I am unable to discover any further influence of Clausewitz on the strategic and tactical thinking of Marx and Engels (the similarities in the assessment of the nature and possibilities of guerrilla warfare will be discussed in the next section) — the two revolutionaries seem to have paid hardly any attention to the general "philosophy" of the General anyway. In view of the obvious and essential difference in approach, it would be out of place to want to bring the war conception of Marx and Engels into too close a connection with that of Clausewitz, as sometimes happens under the impression of Lenin's alleged "Clausewitzianism". Theoretically more fruitful appears a complementary utilization of the concepts and individual insights presented on both sides, insofar as this is possible and logically justifiable. On the direct mentions of Clausewitz in the writings of Marx and Engels see the compilations by Blasius, *Clausewitz*, 278-280, and Ancona, *Einfluß*, 562 ff.

[818] Engels, *Volunteer Artillery*, *The Volunteer Journal* Oct. 13, 1860 = CW, 18, 432.

[819] Engels, *The Relief of Lucknow*, *NYDT* Feb. 1, 1858 = CW, 15, 437.

[820] Engels, *Über den Krieg*, I, *The Pall Mall Gazette* July 29, 1870 = MEW, 17, 12.

beginning of the war.[821] Within the framework of general industrial development, steam was a special "element that has changed warfare since Napoleon".[822] Engels expressed this insight in connection with the observation that only through railways and steamships did the French succeed in 1859 in preventing the Austrian attack on Piedmont. Already in 1848, however, he noted "the superiority of troops drawn in rapidly by railways over the slow peasants arriving on foot".[823] In the French railway network he saw again the guarantee for a strong defense through the sudden concentration of large forces: "at whatever point the enemy may appear strongest, everywhere the whole power of the reserve army can be thrown against him from Paris by rail".[824]

Another element which according to Engels changed warfare since Napoleon was the "better covering of states by entrenched camps and fortress groups" or group systems of fortresses, which can protect an army even against considerable superiority.[825] The small fortresses from Vauban's time lost their importance with the advent of numerically strong armies, but these too had to overcome considerable difficulties whenever they stood before large fortresses with garrisons of 15-20,000 men, which they had to storm because their observation often turned out even more cumbersome. When Montalembert and above all Aster developed the group system of fortresses, this contributed to transforming the defensive from a passive into an active one.[826] A system of fortresses remained in any case indispensable in every defensive war,[827] especially since "the strength of a position almost forces the enemy to commit errors," in that the observation and even more the siege of fortresses entails a division and weakening of his available offensive power.[828] Nevertheless, even the new art of fortification has by no means made rapid Napoleonic maneuvering useless. For the decision still falls on the battlefield, while the fortresses serve primarily to support the movements of the troops and possibly enable their retreat;[829] now, however, the fortresses are there for the sake of the armies, not the armies for the sake of the fortresses.[830] Even more emphatically is warned against an overestimation of field fortifications, which should be regarded merely as temporary bases for offensive operations or as possible means of covering a retreat.[831]

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[821] Marx-Engels, *Der amerikanische Bürgerkrieg*, *Die Presse* Mar. 26, 1862 = MEW, 15, 486 f.
[822] Engels, *Der Feldzug in Italien*, *Das Volk* May 28, 1859 = MEW, 13, 359.
[823] *Der Aufstand in Frankfurt*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Sept. 21, 1848 = MEW, 5, 411.
[824] *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 258; cf. above Note 291 (importance of control over the railway in the American Civil War).
[825] *Der Feldzug in Italien*, *Das Volk* May 28, 1859 = MEW, 13, 358.
[826] Engels, *Sevastopol*, *NYDT* June 29, 1855 = CW, 14, 261-3.
[827] Engels, *The Siege of Silistria*, *NYDT* June 26, 1854 = CW, 13, 237 f.
[828] Engels, *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 242.
[829] Engels, *Crimean Prospects*, *NYDT* Oct. 1, 1855 = CW, 14, 528.
[830] Engels, *Po und Rhein*, MEW, 13, 249.
[831] Engels, *Movements of the Armies in Turkey*, *NYDT* Nov. 8, 1853 = CW, 12, 426, 427.

6. Guerrilla War and Militia Army

According to a widespread opinion, the doctrines of Marx and Engels on revolutionary or guerrilla war stand at the beginning of a path which then led consistently to Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh.[832] This opinion stems in reality from an optical illusion, namely it is assumed that the great masters of partisan warfare in our century had to derive their own war doctrines from Marx and Engels just because they appealed to Marx and Engels as ideologists. The two German theorists and revolutionaries did indeed register the guerrilla wars of the 19th century in Europe, Asia and North Africa as noteworthy phenomena and highlighted their general characteristics, but from these observations, which incidentally added nothing substantially new to the already existing findings of other military writers, they distilled no theory about a radically new form of war—one namely which could push aside the traditional ones used by the regular army and serve as a preferred means for the conquest of political power by a nationalist or socialist revolution. On the contrary, they regard the phenomenon of guerrilla warfare more or less in the same perspective as another admirer of Napoleonic art of war, namely Clausewitz, does, i.e., they note primarily its importance as a military auxiliary in national uprisings, which depends on the cooperation with a regular army. One should not be deceived by the fact that in this context "people's war" is spoken of—a term incidentally which is also used by Clausewitz, although revolutionary connotations are missing in him.[833] People's war means here initially every war that is not waged only by the regular army; the arming of civilians and their participation in certain war operations does not mean yet that the regular army is no longer entitled to (absolute) priority and that the war is generally waged as the armed civilians think right. Only under these conditions, which were self-evident for him, did Clausewitz recommend using people's war "with understanding." Marx and Engels would of course wish for a greater and more independent unfolding of elemental people's power in this, but not so much because they considered popular spontaneity as such a more effective means of combat, but then and to the extent that popular participation in the war would weaken the position of a reactionary government. In this sense they welcomed the Prussian free corps of the Wars of Liberation and praised Gneisenau's plans in this regard, while simultaneously partly denouncing and partly explaining the reluctance of the Crown—they did not say, however, that the militia should or could take over more important and decisive tasks in war than those intended for it by Gneisenau (and Clausewitz): "to harass the enemy incessantly, to interrupt his communications, to seize his supply transports or destroy them, but to avoid regular attacks

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[832] Thus Wallach e.g. speaks of an "identity" of the war doctrines of Engels and Mao Tse-tung (*Die Kriegslehre*, 69), by completely overlooking the Napoleonic background of Engels' strategic thinking; despite its ambitious title, his writing forms, by the way, only a hastily compiled collection of quotations.
[833] *Vom Kriege*, VI, 26 = 799 f.

and to withdraw into the forests or swamps before massed regular troops".[834] They thus did not imagine that the war against an enemy like Napoleon could be won by this "people's war" alone; the Landwehr was in their eyes merely a "great army reserve" and "such a defensive institution that an offensive is possible with it only as a result of a repelled invasion, as in 1814 and 1815".[835] In revolutionary perspective they also did not bank on the expansion of the Landwehr, but on the expansion and democratization of the regular army through general conscription; their attitude to the question of the militia army, of which we will still speak, stood largely under the sign of the same sympathies and considerations—at least insofar as statements were concerned that had real-political reference.

This sober and often distanced assessment of guerrilla warfare resulted now certainly from strategic and tactical expediency considerations, in any case not from adherence to alleged rules of international law or to a legalistic view of war as war between states or subjects of international law etc. Marx and Engels were revolutionary enough not to be afraid of armed conflicts outside of international law "legality"—and they were also sufficiently trained in ideology critique (at least with regard to hostile ideologies) not to take such "legality" at face value. They therefore had no use for that hedging of war which rested on the separation between civil and military, declared war to be the affair of the military and equated the capitulation of military and government with the capitulation of the nation. Engels contrasts "real war," "in which the nation itself participates," with "purely conventional wars" ("wars of governments, which concluded peace as soon as their military machinery was broken or worn out") and regrets that European traditions concede the right to "real self-defense" only to "barbarians," such as e.g. the Caucasian tribes or the Algerians, while we expect from civilized states that "they fight according to etiquette and that the genuine nation does not make itself guilty of the crudeness of continuing the struggle after the official nation has had to surrender".[836] It is no crime if a people "continues to defend itself as soon as its standing army has become everything",[837] the salvation of the nation requires in this case a revolutionary war, in which revolutionary measures and revolutionary energy are necessary.[838] In a war *pro aris et*

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[834] Engels, *Preußische Franktireurs*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Dec. 9, 1870 = MEW, 17, 204-7.

[835] Engels, *Die preußische Militärfrage...*, MEW, 16, 50, 43.

[836] Engels, *Die Aussichten des Krieges*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Dec. 8, 1870 = MEW, 17, 197. Elsewhere Engels attributes the lack of national enthusiasm among the civilized Western European nations to the influence of the economistic-capitalist attitude, see *Über den Krieg*, XXII, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Oct. 11, 1870 = MEW, 17, 131.

[837] See the letter from Marx to Kugelmann dated Dec. 13, 1870 = MEW, 33, 163. That even with these theses Marx and Engels remain within a framework of thought that would also be acceptable to Clausewitz, every knower of the confessional writing must know.

[838] See the letter from Marx to Lafargue dated Feb. 4, 1871 = MEW, 33, 178. Cf. the metaphorical distinction between "constitutional" and "revolutionary" warfare in Marx, *Über den amerikanischen*

focis, in a people's war for the preservation of the nation, the means used cannot be evaluated according to the generally recognized rules of regular warfare nor according to any other abstract yardstick; especially with peoples who are exposed to the plunder and violence of a colonial power, such means, however cruel or treacherous they may look, form only the reflection of the behavior of the oppressor, the appropriate answer to it.[839]

To the blurring of boundaries between civil and military in people's war corresponds the blurring of boundaries between war and peace in international reality. Marx and Engels point repeatedly to such cases which give the lie to international law fictions, and mock the strange discovery of the British in the recent Chinese war, namely that "in bombarding the towns of an Empire you are not waging war upon that Empire itself".[840] That warlike acts take place without declarations of war is not merely an artifice which e.g. procures domestic political freedom of movement for a *de facto* warring government or even useful alibis for an entire *de facto* warring state,[841] but beyond that a proof that the boundaries between war and peace were much more fluid even in the 19th century than those legalistic constructions want to make believe which contrast the "world civil war" of the 20th century with the allegedly hedged war of earlier times.[842] In view of this state of affairs, Marx finds paradoxical the Declaration on the Law of the Sea (1856), since it (to the detriment of England and to the benefit of Russia), with the abolition of piracy and the guarantee of the free movement of neutral ships, attempts to shape a condition nonexistent and impossible in land warfare: "Piracy does not constitute a greater barbarity than the actions of volunteer corps or insurgents in land warfare. Pirate ships are the insurgents of the sea. Confiscation of the private property of a belligerent nation also takes place in land warfare. War levies, for example, strike only the governmental treasury of the enemy or the property of private individuals; the nature of land warfare protects enemy property located on neutral territory, or subject to sovereign rights or free movement. The nature of maritime warfare abolishes these limits, since the sea, as the common highway of nations, is not subject to the sovereign rights of any power…" The Declaration transforms maritime warfare into a war between governments. It renders property inviolable, while denying the same to persons. It separates commerce from the risks of war and renders merchants indifferent to the risks of

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Bürgerkrieg, *Die Presse* Aug. 9, 1862 = MEW, 15, 526; cf. the letter to Engels dated Aug. 7, 1862 = MEW, 30, 270.

[839] Engels, *Persia-China*, *NYDT* June 5, 1857 = CW, 15, 282; Marx, *The Indian Revolt*, *NYDT* Sept. 16, 1857 = CW, 15, 353. On British atrocities in India cf. Engels, *Details of the Attack on Lucknow*, *NYDT* May 25, 1858 = CW, 15, 530 f; *The British Army in India*, *NYDT* June 26, 1858 = CW, 15, 556 f.

[840] Marx, *The New Chinese War, I*, *NYDT* Sept. 27, 1859 = CW, 16, 510.

[841] Marx, *English Politics*, *NYDT* Feb. 14, 1860 = CW, 17, 338 f.

[842] The weakness of such constructions becomes evident from the material compiled by Grob, *The Relativity of War and Peace*. Cf. above Excursus B, last paragraph.

war.[843] The humanitarian arguments by which the Declaration seeks to justify itself collapse entirely once the physiognomy of land warfare is altered: the privilege of impunity—and it is not possible to conduct war "in a humane manner"—is reserved for land warfare. Moreover, this diplomatic "philanthropy" presupposes that property—always at sea, never on land—is more sacred than human life.[844]

Thus guerrilla warfare is a natural phenomenon in a world in which war and peace cannot be delimited by legalistic formulas, but necessarily interpenetrate. Since its principal characteristic is that hostile actions are carried out by people who do not belong to a regular army, it obviously intensifies and provokes broader resistance by the masses that support them. Where there is no practical willingness of popular masses to participate, there can be no legal or practical organization of effective guerrilla warfare.[845] But even in cases where guerrilla warfare was supported or conducted by the mass of the people, while at the same time mountainous terrain favored it, success was not always achieved. For the exemplary illustration of this distinction, Engels uses four examples: the uprising in Tyrol in 1809 retained its vitality only so long as the Austrian regular armies were nearby; Spanish guerrilla warfare likewise owed much of its duration to the presence of British and Portuguese armies, against which the French were forced to direct their main blows; the war of the Carlists managed to endure only thanks to the miserable condition of the regular army; and the tribes of the Caucasus were always defeated by the attacking Russians, since, although they possessed greater mobility and were able to achieve various successes in raids, they were nevertheless unable to alter the overall outcome decisively.[846] With regard to the relationship between guerrilla warfare and the theater of war, Engels writes of the period of the Crimean War that the Bedouin and Kurdish cavalry, who served in the Turkish army, could certainly have compelled the Russians to disperse and thus forced them to exhaust their forces; however, their successes would have been very limited if the Turkish regular army had not existed. From this emerged the following general conclusion: "The support of a regular army is today necessary for the progress of every revolutionary or guerrilla war against a regular army."[847] As the example of the Carlist war indicates, this conclusion can also be formulated inversely: insofar as the regular army functions effectively and possesses sufficient forces, it remains superior to irregular troops.

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[843] Marx, "Das Kabinett von Washington und die Westmächte", *Die Presse*, 25.12.1861 = *MEW*, vol. 15, p. 427 ff.
[844] Letter of Marx to Beesly of 12.9.1870 = *MEW*, vol. 33, p. 144.
[845] See the letter of Engels to Marx of 23.5.1862 = *MEW*, vol. 30, p. 240 ff., as well as Marx–Engels, "Die Lage auf dem amerikanischen Kriegsschauplatz", *Die Presse*, 30.5.1862 = *MEW*, vol. 15, p. 507.
[846] Engels, "Mountain Warfare in the Past and Present", *NYDT*, 27.1.1857 = *CW*, vol. 15, p. 171.
[847] "The Holy War", *NYDT*, 15.11.1853 = *CW*, vol. 12, p. 432 ff.

The superiority of the regular army was, for Engels, even more evident because, as we know, he believed that mountainous terrain favors the attacker more than the defender.[848] But even terrain with rocky formations and deep ravines, which in itself favors irregular troops more than plains, the regular infantry would, in his view, prevail even with a numerical ratio of one to two, owing to the organization of skirmishers (with skirmishers supporting flanks and reserves behind the skirmish line), owing to planned movements, and owing to the coordinated action of the army; the Spanish army did not achieve success in the war against the Moroccans precisely because it did not possess this tactic.[849] Engels always believed so firmly in the superiority of the regular army over every other form of battle formation. Let us recall that, even before he devoted himself to systematic military studies—that is, when he was still close to the era of the Napoleonic and the so-called national and people's wars—he argued in favor of guerrilla warfare only under the condition of cooperation between regular and irregular troops. "When a people fights for its independence," he wrote in 1849, must not "limit itself to the ordinary means of war," but it must employ massive uprising and guerrilla war as the only means "whereby a less strong army can be enabled to resist the stronger and better organized one".[850] The role of the guerrillas is seen here obviously in providing help to the regular army which would reduce or remedy its disadvantages vis-à-vis the enemy's army. For such a purpose guerrilla warfare could be organized and promoted from above, i.e., on the part of the regular military leadership. Thus Engels recommended to the Piedmontese at that time "to organize guerrillas quickly on the southern Alpine slope and in the Brescian area by rapid advance with light troops on the right wing of the Austrians, which threaten the flank and, in case of the defeat of a single corps, the retreat of the Imperials, cut off their supplies, and propagate the insurrection up to the Tyrolean Alps".[851]

In his somewhat more detailed description of the Spanish guerrilla war Marx expressed himself equally reservedly and distantly. Guerrilla war appears here not as the military-organizational expression and climax of the national uprising, but on the contrary as the necessary and only remaining way out of the dissolution of army and government as centers of national power. The fortunes of armies, writes Marx, reflect, especially in revolutionary times, the true nature of the civil government. When the Central Junta entrusted with the expulsion of the intruders found an inglorious end and the Spanish armies were destroyed, regular warfare also dissolved into guerrilla fights.[852] "The mere fact of the abandonment of the regular warfare proves the disappearance of the national before the local centers of Government. When the disasters of the

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[848] See above, note 301.
[849] "Progress of the Moorish War", *NYDT*, 19.1.1860 = *CW*, vol. 16, p. 550.
[850] *Die Niederlage der Piemontesen*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Apr. 1, 1849 = MEW, 6, 387.
[851] *Der Krieg in Italien und Ungarn*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Mar. 28, 1849 = MEW, 6, 383 f.
[852] *Revolutionary Spain*, III, *NYDT* Oct. 20, 1854 = CW, 13, 408.

standing army became regular, the rising of the guerrillas became general, and the body of the people, hardly thinking of the national defeats, exulted in the local successes of their heroes".[853] The initial free corps movement was followed by a phase in which guerrilla bands set the tone, which formed from the remnants of the Spanish armies, from Spanish deserters of the French armies and from such elements as smugglers etc., who pursued the war as their own cause and only insofar as it served their immediate interests, whereby as a whole they were probably hardly striking, yet extremely dangerous to the French precisely through their lack of organization or through their enormous mobility; in a third phase finally, when the guerrilla bands became corps of 3-6000 men and fell into the hands of a few leaders who abused them for their own purposes, they lost precisely through their imitation of the regular army their mobility and provided the French with considerable advantages in combating them. The guerrilla ended practically with "corps francs continually on the point of dwindling into banditti, or sinking down to the level of standing regiments".[854] After years of irregular warfare the guerrillas had to adopt the habits of vagabonds and indulge in all passions of hatred, plunder and revenge, so that they became a most dangerous mob, "always ready... to step forward for him who is able to give them good pay".[855]

A characteristic of the guerrilla is thus political lack of perspective and the easy sliding into the criminal if the guerrilla war is not conducted under the aegis of a regular army or a political leadership with fixed and clear goals. That does not mean, of course, that guerrilla war in itself, especially as a symptom of national consciousness and protest, is bad or superfluous—only politically hopeless. Thus Marx shows himself extremely skeptical regarding the ability of the Taipings to transform Chinese society through their sterile terrorism, although he recognizes the necessity and the right of their uprising; he describes their movement as the "jump-off of a fossil social life".[856] Even worse things seemed to be with the guerrilla war which flared up in India after the defeat of the Sepoys.[857] Here too the irregulars possessed the usual advantages over the regular troops of a foreign enemy: speed of movement, better adaptation to climatic conditions, easier mastery of supply difficulties, friendly population ;[858] although they lacked artillery and above all cavalry—a particularly noticeable disadvantage in a country with extensive plains—they succeeded in temporarily restricting the power of the British to the mere control of

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[853] *Ibid.*, V, *NYDT* Oct. 30, 1854 = CW, 13, 420.
[854] *Ibid.*, 421, 422.
[855] *Ibid.*, 423.
[856] *Chinesisches*, *Die Presse*, MEW, 15, 516.
[857] Engels attributed this defeat not least to the lack of leadership or of good officers (*The Capture of Delhi*, *NYDT* Dec. 5, 1857 = CW, 15, 392); "the British fought with all the advantages of skilled soldiers obeying one chief over half savages commanded by nobody", *The Siege and Storming of Lucknow*, *NYDT* Jan. 30, 1858 = CW, 15, 424; cf. *The Relief of Lucknow*, *NYDT* Feb. 1, 1858 = CW, 15, 436.
[858] Engels, *The Revolt in India*, *NYDT* June 15, 1858 = CW, 15, 554 f.

the cities.[859] Nevertheless, their military incompetence, their organizational weakness and their political disorientation were so great that they had to end in banditry. Instead of organizing guerrilla war adequately, namely interrupting communications between cities, cutting off their supply etc., they contented themselves with levying taxes for themselves and enjoying their free time, which of course had to effect a deterioration of their relations with the population; not only did they plunder the peasants, but the peasants also murdered and robbed them.[860] Also among the Moors Engels missed the political-national fanaticism which would have lent their necessarily irregular struggle determination and cohesion, with the result that their actions remained short-winded and contradictory;[861] the difficulties of the Spaniards stemmed therefore more from geographical conditions and the necessity of dispersing their troops than from the resistance of the irregulars—"that never will defeat disciplined troops so long as they hold together and can be fed".[862] Even the Algerians, whose devotion and art of war Engels praises, were able only to postpone the French conquest, not to thwart it. The colonial wars served therefore finally primarily for the practice and training of European armies. Engels attributes the achievements of the French armies during the Italian War to the experiences from the long fights in Algeria.[863]

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Marx and Engels sought to draw no special lessons from (national) guerrilla wars for the organization of the uprising of the revolutionary working class. Engels spoke in 1852 of the possibility that guerrilla war, which until then had recorded successes "only in relatively sparsely populated countries," could also have "more significant results" in very densely populated countries (in doing so, however, he had a national resistance and no class struggle in mind).[864] Already in 1856, however, Marx noted that the army had learned from the street fights of 1848/49 and that the attempt to transfer guerrilla war from the Spanish mountains to the streets of Madrid had failed;[865] as is well known, Engels, who pronounced the final insights on this question in 1895, expressed himself in the same sense.[866] If we do not fall victim to the prejudices and optical illusions mentioned at the beginning of this section, it is also not difficult to become aware of the immense differences between a national guerrilla war and a workers' revolution as Marx and Engels understood it—differences which condition corresponding deviations in strategy and tactics. A revolution of the organized working class under the leadership of a well-organized and disciplined party would take place

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[859] Engels, *The Indian Army*, *NYDT* July 21, 1858 = CW, 15, 582, 583.
[860] Engels, *The Revolt in India*, *NYDT* Oct. 1, 1858 = CW, 15, 607, 609.
[861] *The Moorish War*, *NYDT* Feb. 8, 1860 = CW, 16, 555.
[862] *The Moorish War*, *NYDT* Mar. 17, 1860 = CW, 16, 565.
[863] *Military Reform in Germany*, *NYDT* Feb. 20, 1860 = CW, 17, 345.
[864] *England*, I (Jan. 23, 1852), MEW, 8, 214.
[865] *Revolution in Spain*, *NYDT* Aug. 18, 1856 = CW, 15, 105.
[866] Introduction to *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, MEW, 7, 520.

primarily in the large cities and presumably during a crisis; it would therefore require rapid, determined and disciplined action, which would have to be organized and led rather on the basis of the rules of offensive Napoleonic art of war and precisely avoiding the long-winded and patient tactics of a guerrilla war (although the use of means and methods was by no means excluded which a regular army does not use): that is precisely the meaning of the parallel which Engels drew between the art of insurrection and the art of war.[867] It cannot be asserted that historical reality has refuted Marx and Engels on this point. For such a revolution has not taken place so far and therefore the question of the strategic and tactical prerequisites of its success remains still open (although the Bolshevik uprising-putsch of 1917 was planned and executed partly in accordance with the rules mentioned by Marx and Engels), while movements that conquered power after a short or long guerrilla war were not socialist in their sense, but fundamentally nationalist in socialist garb—a garb which had to be worn necessarily, and indeed ostensibly and stubbornly, in the struggle against a capitalist foreign enemy. To corroborate the position of Marx and Engels it must still be said that guerrilla war—contrary to the impression which prevailed for understandable reasons in the first three decades after the Second World War—does not represent a form of combat with universal claim to superiority in the age of "world civil war," but is bound to a special epoch and situation which already largely belongs to the past, so that no great historical effects are to be expected from it anymore. Guerrilla war proved itself primarily in the struggle of colonial or semi-colonial peoples against a foreign master who remained and had to remain racially and culturally a foreign body within the indigenous society. In the relatively few cases again where guerrilla war as civil war helped a movement or party to power, this could happen precisely because the irregular troops were already strong enough to form factually a regular army, i.e., one which was disciplined and hierarchically organized or controlled and led by such an organized party at all levels (the prominent example for this is China). What looked like a guerrilla war was thus, at least in the final phase, struggle between armies, which was won by the stronger army, while the other shrank or dissolved; where such shrinkage or dissolution of the regular army did not take place, the guerrilla fighters also could not prevail, especially since they usually were able to constitute themselves as an army only parallel to the dissolution of the regular army.

The strategic and tactical expediency considerations which led to the sober assessment of the possibilities of a guerrilla war also made the attitude of Marx and Engels toward the plan of a militia army at least ambivalent. The early liberal army and war view, which turned against dynastic wars and standing armies and saw in the arming of the people a first step toward the gradual attenuation of wars in general, influenced the initial phase of the two German revolutionaries significantly and was simultaneously translated by them into the idea of a

[867] See above Notes 295 and 296.

proletarian militia.[868] Still in his pre-communist phase Engels raved about the Wars of Liberation as the time in which the armed people could appear for a moment as the source of state power.[869] In the early descriptions of communist society, again, the absence of an unproductive standing army is highlighted, since the whole people will be armed and every citizen will learn the use of weapons "alongside his other occupations".[870] As an attempt at a somewhat shortened, but real anticipation of this aspect of future communist society must be interpreted the slogan issued by Marx and Engels in 1848 of general arming of the people with simultaneous binding of the organization of the army to the organization of labor.[871]

Presumably the disappointing experiences of the Baden uprising contributed considerably to Engels losing his faith in the striking power of non-regular troops shortly thereafter and learning to appreciate better the advantages of regular armies. In that uprising he was repelled in any case by those phenomena which he was henceforth constantly to denounce: the "ignorance of the armed forces," the "contradictory orders," the "comfortable confusion," the lack of concentrated energy and the bad leadership.[872] Therefore he arrived at the realization that good cadres were of decisive importance, and expressed the fear that the revolution expected for the immediate future "must either remain on the defensive or limit itself to hollow proclamations..." for lack of good cadres.[873] In the plans which he designs in 1852 for a revolutionary war against the "Holy Alliance," the criterion of efficiency therefore gains the upper hand completely, while of belief in the elemental revolutionary energy and initiative of the masses very little is to be felt. This shows already in his historical retrospective of the beginnings of the people's war at the time of the French Revolution. He by no means admires the revolutionary warfare of the Convention, which had been merely reactive and improvisational, and he shares Napoleon's derogatory opinion of Carnot, who could not be the inventor of mass warfare since he acted precisely according to the "opposite war manner," namely divided the French armies instead of concentrating them, and operated against the flanks of the enemy in such a way that the latter had to concentrate himself thereby; only the errors of the Allies, who "dallied away" precious time and instead of marching resolutely to Paris lay with strategic pedantry before the fortresses, had saved the revolution from defeat and ruin.[874] Engels does not doubt that finally the proletarian revolution no less than the bourgeois one will prove capable of bringing a new kind of warfare into the world, which will not deny the achievements of the previous art of war, above all massiveness and mobility, but rather

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[868] See on this the good analysis by Höhn, *Sozialismus und Heer*, I, esp. 36 ff.
[869] Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Telegraph für Deutschland*, January 1841, MEW, Suppl. Vol., Part 2, 121.
[870] Engels, *Zwei Reden*..., I, MEW, 2, 542 f.
[871] *Forderungen der Kommunistischen Partei in Deutschland*, MEW, 5, 3.
[872] *Die deutsche Reichsverfassungskampagne*, MEW, 7, esp. 127, 141, 154 f., 167.
[873] Letter to Marx dated Sept. 26, 1851 = MEW, 27, 355.
[874] *Bedingungen und Aussichten*..., MEW, 7, 468, 471, 473; cf. *Army*, CW, 18, 113 f.

potentiate them by making use of the superior productive forces of communist society and exploiting the war potential of the population much better thanks to the elimination of class differences.[875] The practical relevance of this future perspective *hic et nunc* remains however equal to zero: "Unfortunately, however, all this can only be carried out after long years and at a time when such mass wars can no longer occur for lack of an adequate enemy".[876] As things are today, the victorious revolution cannot bring a new art of war into the world and follow it if it does not want to break its neck; it must therefore wage war in Napoleonic manner and rely on a regular army, at whose side of course a proletarian Landwehr should be placed.[877]

In the following two decades the view of the superiority of the regular army over the militia army formed a leitmotif in Engels' writings. He doubted to the highest degree the ability of the Swiss militia army, which lacked homogeneity, uniform goals and discipline, to offer effective resistance to Louis Bonaparte's troops;[878] when he took a stand on the reorganization of the Prussian army, he wanted "to take no account of the fantasies of a militia army";[879] and on the occasion of the experience with the American and British militia he explained the reasons why the militia in the latter case could function only as an appendage of the regular army. He asserted thereby that "the main thing [is] good officers and the confidence of the men in the officers," "which both are simply not affordable with the militia system"; Napoleon led recruits with three months of training fearlessly before the enemy because he could rely on his good cadres, i.e., his officers and non-commissioned officers.[880] Volunteers and militiamen can only be used efficiently if they are integrated into the firm framework of a regular army and trained and led by experienced officers.[881] In Great Britain, where such officers exist, the chances for a useful militia are therefore much better than in the United States, where this prerequisite was missing at the outbreak of the Civil War, so that the flood of recruits or volunteers had to burst the existing organizational framework. The special practical conclusion from these findings read: "No army newly formed out of civilians can ever subsist in an efficient state unless it is trained and supported by the immense intellectual and material resources which are deposited in the hands of a proportionately strong regular army, and principally by the organization which forms the chief strength of the regulars."[882] And the general theoretical conclusion again read:

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[875] *Ibid.*, 481.
[876] *Ibid.*, 482.
[877] *Ibid.*, 483, 488.
[878] *Savoyen, Nizza und der Rhein*, MEW, 13, 592.
[879] *Die preußische Militärfrage...*, MEW, 16, 54.
[880] Letter to Marx dated Jan. 16, 1868 = MEW, 32, 21; cf. *Der amerikanische Bürgerkrieg*, *Die Presse* Mar. 26, 1862 = MEW, 15, 487.
[881] *A Review of English Volunteer Riflemen*, *The Volunteer Journal* Sept. 14, 1860 = CW, 18, 415 f.; *Volunteer Generals*, *The Volunteer Journal* Mar. 16, 1861 = CW, 18, 483; *Brighton and Wimbledon*, *The Volunteer Journal* Apr. 6, 1861 = CW, 18, 485.
[882] *Lessons of the American War*, *The Volunteer Journal* Dec. 6, 1861 = CW, 18, 527 f.

"Only a communistically organized and educated society can approach the militia system very closely and even there still asymptotically".[883]

Also in 1870 Engels felt as the organizational "basic error" of the defenders of Paris the "lack of trained instructors, officers and sergeants," which hindered them "to become good soldiers".[884] With the Commune and within the framework of the strived-for transformation of all public functions into "real workers' functions" the time seemed nevertheless to have come "to organize a militia on a national scale" and to "put an end to the standing army," which would have the double advantage of getting rid of a great financial burden and eliminating an instrument of class rule.[885] In the moment of revolutionary enthusiasm obviously the view represented by Engels in 1852 was forgotten that the victorious proletariat too would initially have to make use of a regular army. In 1871 at least this forgetfulness could still be excused with the actual existence of a revolutionary movement which was fought by all regular armies, the French no less than the German. But when Engels in the 1890s once again advocated the idea of a militia army, even this excuse was missing and at the same time any real basis for the realization of his proposal. Engels came to this idea incidentally not by way of the new realization that his earlier reservations against the militia army advanced for decades were not valid and had to be withdrawn, but rather motivated by the wish to stop the rise of militarism and thus to contribute to the aversion of that war which according to his then view could initially only harm the revolutionary movement.[886] Under the spell of this wish he opines now that "from the purely military standpoint" nothing stands in the way of the "gradual abolition of standing armies" or their transformation "into a militia based on general arming of the people," and emphasizes that standing armies should fight rather the internal enemy, i.e., the revolution, than the external one.[887] How could armies, however, which served precisely this goal, be abolished without revolution? Was it not a utopian reversal of the logical and real sequence to demand things before the revolution which actually could only be a consequence of the revolution—and moreover to demand these things precisely for the facilitation of the revolution from the most bitter enemies of this same revolution?

However much the wish may have been father to the thought in this late plea for the militia army too, one thing shows itself here in any case with certainty: through these plans the catastrophe of a war of unheard-of extent was to be averted. From this war Engels expected, as we know, destruction and economic ruin, and he hoped that no side would dare a war with such uncertain outcome and such unforeseeable, in any case disastrous consequences. For that

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[883] Letter to Marx dated Jan. 16, 1868 = MEW, 32, 21; emphasized by Engels.
[884] *Über den Krieg*, XXI, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Oct. 6, 1870 = MEW, 17, 122.
[885] Marx, First Draft of *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, MEW, 17, 543, 544.
[886] See above Sect. 4, p. 209 ff.
[887] *Kann Europa abrüsten?*, MEW, 22, 371.

reason alone it is inadmissible to call Marx and Engels the fathers of modern total war.[888] Their idea of "people's war" was oriented rather on the example of the war "as the French waged it in 1793"[889] than on prophetic visions of what took place in the 20th century; and when they demanded the "people in arms," namely "really general conscription" or "an army with short training time and long service obligation",[890] they did so always with a side glance at the assumed connection between general conscription and domestic democratization process. The adherence of their strategic and tactical thinking to the model of Napoleonic art of war testifies finally also to the fact that as military theorists in the narrower sense they remained within the framework of the 19th century, although important war events of the 20th century which burst that framework have been connected by friend and foe in many ways with their name.

[888] Thus Neumann, *Engels und Marx*, 156.

[889] Engels, *Die Niederlage der Piemontesen*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Apr. 1, 1849 = MEW, 6, 389.

[890] Engels, *Wie die Preußen zu schlagen sind*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Sept. 17, 1870 = MEW, 17, 107 f.; *Das Prinzip des preußischen Militärsystems*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* Oct. 8, 1870 = MEW, 17, 127.

V. Excursus C: War and Marxist-Leninist Conception of History

These remarks form less of an excursus and more of a note for lovers of Marxist-Leninist history of dogma. Incidentally, the subject does not allow for long expositions, since the Marxist-Leninist theory of war, as it has been presented in the Eastern Bloc for decades, represents a stereotypical repetition of Lenin's etiology and typology of war[891] (the Sino-Soviet debate on the inevitability of wars in the early 1960s was also conducted within this theoretical framework). On the other hand, so far no fundamental investigations of the question of war underpinned by universal history have seen the light of day within Western Marxism, which otherwise strove so much to research ideologically-normatively usable aspects of Marx's work ("alienation" etc.). In the older literature, again, as far as I know, only Kautsky undertook an interesting attempt with theoretical implications, which however referred to a special, albeit very important problem and touched only indirectly on the periodization question central to later Marxist-Leninist historical dogmatics; this question did not pose itself for Kautsky in the form it assumed in the Soviet Union since the 1930s.

Under the admitted influence of Gumplowicz's theories[892] Kautsky ascribed a decisive historical function to war in the emergence of classes and the state, disputing all three factors which according to Engels' account ruined equality within the gens and brought about the transition to class society. First, Kautsky rejects the assumption of the hereditary nature of offices and functions in primitive classless society and asks where the holders of the same took the power from to enforce such heredity, especially since the difficulty of a task or a situation made the choice of the respectively suitable person all the more urgent; the heredity of offices and functions must therefore presuppose their autonomization vis-à-vis society, not vice versa. Second, the differences in wealth within the gens had also not assumed such an extent that genuine class differences could have arisen from them, while "primitive democracy" excluded the use of the wealth of individuals for the exploitation of poorer fellow citizens; the division of labor could perhaps cause the division of functions, but not the division of society into richer and poorer. And third, slavery cannot possibly have arisen from the division of labor within a classless community; here undoubtedly war and only war has been at work, and the obviously decisive effect of war in this case makes its decisive importance appear more clearly also in the two other problematic cases mentioned above. In fact, wealth too constitutes a result of war in general, whereby its differences go back to the differences in the share of war booty; and the autonomization of offices—which cannot be explained by the mere emergence of slavery, since all free citizens made common cause against the slaves anyway and there were no solidarizations between poor citizens and slaves—likewise came about through war, which first called the state into life. The state came into the world as a conqueror state, whereby class division did not occur through splitting of the community, but "through unification of two

[891] See the next chapter.

[892] *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, II, 84 f.

communities into one, of which the one became the ruling, exploiting, the other the ruled, exploited class".[893]

The timid, scattered and finally stalled attempts at a historical-theoretical upgrading of war within the Marxist-Leninist conception of history formed a kind of side effect of the dispute over the so-called Asiatic mode of production, which must be presupposed as known here. The finding or assumption of the millennia-long structural unalterability of the Asiatic mode of production or "Oriental despotism" and then of the leap-like transition of such a socio-economic structure to higher modes of production like the capitalist or socialist one by bypassing slave and feudal society—this finding or assumption lent additional weight to the already older observation recognized also by orthodoxy for certain few cases, that not all peoples would have to go through all socio-economic formations provided for by the unilinear five-stage schema. If one wanted to reconcile this observation with the eschatological certainty that the communist final phase of history would be realized as the necessary result of the entire preceding history, i.e., of all historically necessary socio-economic formations, then in the case of a frequently occurring deviation of the history of individual peoples from the named unilinear schema it would have to be postulated that not all peoples went through all stages, but one people covered these, the other those stages or even represented one or the other stage among them paradigmatically; the schema as a whole is thus not realized (necessarily) by the history of every people, but indeed (necessarily) by the history of all mankind. It is actually a matter here of a Hegelianizing modification and reinterpretation of the orthodox schema, only that the place of the world spirit wandering from one world-historical people to another is taken by the respectively most advanced mode of production in its embodiment by a certain collective subject. The eschatological-historical-philosophical question can be translated into the language of epistemology as follows: the logical unity of history or all its stages is to be proven, although the empirical collective subjects through which this unity has to come about relieve each other in the role of pioneer without a single one among them embodying the postulated unity of history in pure form. If, however, the overall historical development is not always and not necessarily endogenous—and it cannot be, otherwise all peoples would have to go through all stages of the same, since every stage would produce the next out of inner necessity—then the exogenous factors automatically and considerably gain in weight; with the shift of the respective center of gravity of history from one collective subject to the other, not only external technical-economic or cultural influences, but also and often above all conquest and war must acquire a decisive historical significance.

We come immediately to the most interesting sketch of this Hegelianizing modification of the orthodox Marxist-Leninist schema of overall historical development, designed by the East

[893] *Ibid.*, 68–79.

German ancient historian E. Welskopf. Welskopf directs her attention to two basic characteristics of this development. First, its respective "crystallization point" "wanders," so that in overall historical perspective "a number of nodal points, of climaxes in the course of development" follow one another: the early high cultures experienced their heyday in Asia and North Africa; on the Mediterranean basin ancient slave society assumed its typical form; Western Europe put feudalism into the world; capitalism wandered from Western Europe to North America to reach its zenith there, and Eastern Europe took over world-historical leadership when socialism was placed on the agenda of history. Second, "a kind of pulsation of progress" takes place, thus initially a limitation of the same to certain centers, then a spread of the area of the respectively leading mode of production etc., whereby of course the respectively new peak performance forms indeed at a changed location, but always on the basis of the previous peak performance.[894] In answering the question why the scene had to change so that new peak performances could be produced, the factor of "extra-economic force" is now to be "seen in a new light," namely it is to be investigated whether this force as state etc. promotes or inhibits certain tendencies. But the change of scene is also not insignificantly influenced or conditioned by war: "The defensive and even the offensive wars of the classes maturing to world-historically novel performance, taking over leadership and rule in their own territory, against the hitherto leading polities move under a new aspect, together with the uprisings and revolutions which accelerate development by weakening the hitherto ruling class, by strengthening the hitherto oppressed. In the early periods of class societies uprisings of the oppressed and exploited have occurred, but not prevailed. The successful revolutions belong only to the transition from Western European feudalism to capitalism and from Eastern European capitalism to socialism. Of all the greater importance in the early stages were the wars of the territories growing up to continue development".[895]

To procure the necessary theoretical freedom of movement for the justification of this overall concept, Welskopf tries to relativize the orthodox periodization schema oriented towards the endogenous factors of historical development indirectly by pointing out that for Marx the so-called periodization questions were by no means at the center of interest, but had been by-products of the investigation of the capitalist mode of production.[896] Above all, however, she undertakes such an expansion of the concept of economy that thereby the elevation of extra-economic force to the determining factor of economic processes in the narrower sense becomes much more understandable and even obvious. Accordingly, economy is "neither technology nor organization," but "the science of human relations, in whose network technology and organization, qualification and mobility are integrated and only thereby jointly realized"; in

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[894] *Vorbemerkung*, 171–3.
[895] *Ibid.*, 174.
[896] *Ibid.*, 170.

the analysis of economic relations we are "in the border area of economy, law and politics," we are dealing with man "in his wholeness".[897] The direct origin of these theses from considerations which originally referred to the question of the Asiatic mode of production or oriental despotism is shown vividly in an older treatise by Welskopf, in which precisely the historical-morphological independence of the Asiatic mode of production vis-à-vis ancient slave society is worked out. Here it says, in oriental despotism "the political form of rule is in truth identical with the economic." After this finding of an absolute possibility of intertwinement of economy and politics, in which the insight into the inherent dynamics of the latter goes hand in hand with a dynamization or expansion of the concept of the former, the view is represented—in view of the now clear peculiarity of European development in comparison to the Asian—that at a certain stage of historical development one part of the world temporarily takes over leadership and outstrips the others; if the new mode of production is consolidated precisely thanks to its initial limitation to a center, then its spread begins.[898] By way of this syllogistic reasoning we come to the theory of the pulsation of progressive development, at whose turning points wars can play the described role.

Other Marxist-Leninist attempts in the same direction do not go so far, neither regarding the breadth of perspective nor regarding the (potential) radicality of the results. Thus Tokei concentrated on the function of war in the great historical transitions, without however adopting the Hegelianizing modification of the unilinear schema. In doing so, he did not do much more than compile quotes from Marx and Engels on war and conquest, without going into the general historical-theoretical implications of their content or discussing their logical coherence. Following the known tactic of authors of the Eastern Bloc who want to suggest a certain idea without tangling all too hard with the guardians of dogma, he nevertheless uses this rather raw collection of quotes as a background against which many a still shimmering, but at least perceived as new thesis is supposed to appear somehow convincing. In the zeal to bring out this new, he even overinterprets the texts occasionally, as e.g. when he imputes to Marx the view that the army can be one of the driving forces of general economic development.[899] On the basis of his adherence to the unilinear schema with simultaneous inclusion of the Asiatic mode of production in the same, he opines that Asiatic, ancient and Germanic property form constitute a historical line of development, whereby the second emerges from the first and the third from this—"this development however is mediated in the transition into the ancient as into the Germanic form by the reoccurrence of the tribal-communal [Asiatic] property form through barbarian conquests".[900] Thereby conquest by war is said to be unavoidable not simply for the

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[897] *Ibid.*, 167, 168.
[898] *Probleme*, 312, 313.
[899] *Antike*, 15; cf. above Chap. III, Sect. 3, Note 105–108, and our analysis thereof.
[900] *Ibid.*, 17.

first "occupation," but also necessary in the reproduction of all three property forms.[901] The generalization drawn from this reads that warlike conquest before capitalism is "the necessary mediation of the great transitions"; restrictively it is added, however, that conquest creates only possibilities whose realization depends on the "state of the productive forces".[902]

What prevented a spread or enforcement of the Hegelianizing version of the unilinear schema and the associated new evaluation of extra-economic force and war in the area of validity of Marxist-Leninist ideology was of course not so much the lack of empirical investigations and proofs, but rather the lack of the corresponding political prerequisites. However, it is not certain that an emergence of these prerequisites in the future would set in motion a revision of the currently valid historical dogmatics in the sense of the named version and not in a completely different one. In Soviet literature there are at least individual signs of a partial reception of the view represented in extreme form by Welskopf, although it must be clarified from the outset that not every affirmation of the possibility of skipping a certain stage of historical development may be interpreted as a confession to the Hegelianizing version. Nothing less than that.[903] Nevertheless, an emphatic reference to this possibility always forms the usual starting point of every attempt at a revision of the orthodox schema with the named intention. Thus we read in an essay by Semyonov, the development of human society, whose successive stages are the social formations, reproduces the inner logic of the development of all social organisms taken together; only human history as a whole goes through all social formations, not every single social organism; there is no social organism that has gone through all social formations, and there is no social formation through which all social organisms have gone.[904] Semyonov does not pose the tricky question, however, how the transition from one social formation to the other takes place if the earlier one does not move towards the later and more progressive one of its own accord and if the latter does not emerge from the former. About this he says only, sometimes a destruction of social organisms and an emergence of new and higher ones from the ruins occurs—he even emphasizes that feudalism indeed followed slavery, but did not spring from it.[905] That would obviously be the fitting place to put the role of war and conquest in the foreground, but the author remains silent about it. We can surmise the reason for this if we

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[901] *Ibid.*, 19.
[902] *Ibid.*, 21.
[903] Sawer (*The Concept*, 342) is mistaken when she interprets Zhukov's admission that the Germanic conquerors had skipped the stage of slavery and some Soviet peoples that of capitalism as an adoption of the Hegelianizing version. It is indeed characteristic that Zhukov traces such skipping back to "the powerful influence of the environment" (*Periodization*, 87), but on the other hand the following general rule holds true for him: "there is a general trend towards a successive change of all social-economic formations in all the nations" (*ibid.*, 86). Sawer incidentally ignores the works of Welskopf.
[904] *Socio-Economic Formations*, 43, 46, 45.
[905] *Ibid.*, 49, 44.

visualize that the history-forming function of war is judged most reservedly when adherence to the orthodox unilinear schema must entail an unreserved confession to the primacy of the endogenous driving forces of development. The adherents of the orthodox schema believe themselves capable of mastering the questions raised in the last decades in a relatively painless way by recognizing the possibility of skipping stages of historical development for certain cases, but without particularly emphasizing this observation, and also by asserting the diversity of realization forms of every social formation—which incidentally allows them theoretically to throw slavery and Asiatic mode of production into the same pot.[906] From this historical-theoretical background it is then asserted that war and political force are not decisive historical powers and that they neither contributed to the formation of a new social formation nor could destroy a viable social system.[907]

[906] See e.g. Momjan, *Landmarks*, 53, 58, 66.
[907] *Ibid.*, 145.

VI. Lenin

1. Preliminary Remark

It has not been disputed by anyone that Lenin is a theorist of war or at least that he has developed certain theoretical positions on the phenomenon of war, especially in the age of imperialism. However, the opinion that Lenin is also to be considered a military expert in the narrower sense of the word is not so unanimously held. In modern Soviet publications, Lenin is described as the founder of Soviet military science and specifically as the author of important principles in the field of military art, who, by creatively applying the general principles of Marxism, arrived at the formulation and analysis of specific questions of military theory and tactics—indeed, a declaration of the 2nd Congress of Soviets on the occasion of Lenin's recently occurred death is still cited with approval, according to which he was, among other things, "the greatest military leader of all countries, all times and all peoples";[908] the phrase about Lenin as not only a political but also a military genius remains common.[909] The glorification of the strategist and tactician Lenin served, of course, tangible political purposes or rather became part of Soviet ideology only in connection with these purposes. While in the first phases of Stalinism the merits of Trotsky in the Civil War and in the building of the Red Army were to be belittled or denied by pointing to Lenin's military achievements, the rediscovery of Lenin's military genius after Stalin's death and especially after the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU formed an aspect of the de-Stalinization process set in motion: not Stalin's, but Lenin's spirit had thus made possible the victories of the Red Army in the World War, not Stalin's, but Lenin's spirit should guide the organization and action of this same army in the future. This was, in turn, the answer to Stalin's attempt to present himself, with the help of the laurels reaped in 1943–1945, among other things as the great red (and not only red) commander and military theorist who, although continuing Lenin's work in this respect, simultaneously surpassed it.[910]

If we now disregard Stalin's personal intentions and goals as well as the assessment of his own military gifts and achievements and examine his statements from a purely factual point of view, we must admit that he portrayed the question of Lenin's relationship to military science quite soberly and realistically. As Stalin could recall, Lenin, unlike Engels, did not consider himself an expert in military questions, which he also frankly declared; he also did not read Clausewitz as a military expert, but as a politician who thought about the connection between war and politics.[911] This testimony is first confirmed by Lenin's own statement about what he considered "the most important chapter" in Clausewitz's work;[912] psychologically, it corresponds, in turn, to a characteristic and well-known quality of the professional revolutionary Lenin, namely

[908] Milovidov, *Heritage*, 2, 95, 3 f.
[909] *Lénine et les forces*, 5.
[910] On this Garthoff, *Doctrine*, 28 ff., 184 ff.
[911] *Eine Antwort*, 24.
[912] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 15.

thoroughness and aversion to dilettantism, at least insofar as it concerned the mastery of concrete and practically relevant questions. There is no doubt that during the Civil War Lenin was not only a political leader but also a strategist, thus participating significantly in the drafting of the overall military plan, and that he was, moreover, a war leader in the narrower sense, thus working closely with the military high command and bearing responsibility for operational decisions, indeed often regulating detailed questions at the local level[913]—none of this, however, lies outside the natural competencies and spheres of action of a political leader in wartime, be it a dictatorially or a democratically ruling one. In extremely difficult years, in which the question of power was not least a military question, the politician had to pay special attention to the latter and expand the extent of his direct supervision and control over events in the military field as much as possible. But that does not yet make Lenin an expert in the art of war, although he has proven that he was a politician with a keen sense for what was militarily necessary and correct in each case; his achievement was practical and consisted in the tactically highly flexible application of military principles that were known long before him, and not, for instance, in important new insights or in the conduct of operations that were to assume a paradigmatic character in the future.[914] And precisely his unfamiliarity with the craft of the military, despite all (growing) familiarity with the internals of the métier, allowed him to keep the overall view, i.e., the political overall view, in mind at all times and to do what was militarily necessary and correct not (merely) out of military, but (primarily) out of political considerations. This is shown *e contrario* by the dependence of his military misjudgments on politically incorrect calculation: the fiasco of the Polish campaign had its origin not least in the expectation of an imminent revolution in Central Europe and a solidarization of the revolutionary working class there with the Red Army.

Lenin's unproblematic transition from the political or civil to the military was based on a conception of the political which rested on the concept of struggle and was therefore able to bring the political or civil and the military effortlessly to a common denominator. The military was for him a case of application of the political, not a deviation from it, and therefore it could be mastered by means of the same thinking tools and methods. The thinking method or rather the spontaneous thinking style of Lenin, as it concretized itself in the various expressions of his political genius, forms a single illustration or interpretation of the main and generic term under which political and military action stood for him—namely the concept of struggle. Struggle is, in other words, here the central concept of thinking and at the same time the mode of functioning of thinking itself—not hidden behind the usual moralistic-petty bourgeois disguises and rationalizations, but in cheerful and self-confident openness. Precisely this allows his political thinking to attain the highest concreteness. Theoretical theses and constructions of all

[913] Erickson, *Lenin*, 163 ff., 179 ff.
[914] Cf. the assessment by Schaposchnikow, *Das Hirn der Armee*, 137 f.

kinds are treated and analyzed by him from the perspective of such questions whose answering must amount to the naming of a tangible enemy and thus to the drawing of a clear line of action. Lenin's fixation on certain, often simplistic schemata in philosophy, sociology or economy may well appear to fine thinkers of the desk as illusionary and narrow-minded fanaticism. However, it is not to be taken at face value, but fulfills symbolic functions and gains a highly real-political sense insofar as from the attitude of the political subjects to the theoretical schemata respectively under debate their readiness for a certain form of political action is read off, so that then the localization and naming of the enemy can be undertaken. "Every abstract truth becomes a phrase if one applies it to any arbitrary concrete situation".[915] To always pose the question of truth against the background of a concrete situation means to pose it with regard to a concrete enemy, since every concrete situation in politics is a struggle situation. A truth lying beyond concrete struggle situations and concrete naming of an enemy is for Lenin an irrelevant professors' affair: truth is a function of the basic political situation, namely struggle. Lenin himself embodies, as said, this basic conviction through his thinking style. On the basis of this basic conviction and this thinking style he also develops his theory of war. Therefore, we are dealing here with a theory about the extreme intensification of political struggle, which itself stands in the service of a concrete struggle. The question of war, like every other question too, is raised in the context of a syllogistic reasoning which applies incessantly and exclusively to the central political problem, that of the conquest and maintenance of power; and it is posed concretely, namely from the view of a concrete political subject, the "proletariat" (Lenin further concretized this concept through the concept of the party), which in turn should make use of its own war theory to achieve its own war goals or power purposes. The circle thus closes, theory and practice are one and the same, and they can also only be one and the same in this way.

[915] *Eine harte, aber notwendige Lehre* (Feb. 25, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 307.

2. Politics and War or Lenin and Clausewitz

If Lenin's theory of war does not revolve around the trade of war in the narrower sense, but around the relationships between war and politics, then a reconstruction of his basic theses against the background of his understanding of Clausewitz, which stands precisely under the sign of the question of the relationships between war and politics, can provide the best information about their actual content. With Clausewitz Lenin shares two central assumptions: first, that politics and war can be subsumed under the generic term of conflict or struggle, which is why politics is not *eo ipso* to be equated with "moderation," but the distinguishing feature between politics in peace and politics in war is to be sought exclusively in the non-use or use of military or organized force; and second, that the primacy of politics means no authoritative effect of subjective intentions and objectives in the triggering and conduct of wars, but rather the absolute precedence of the general social and historical conditions, i.e., the precedence of the objective concept of politics over the subjective one. Lenin grasps, of course, the essential unity of war and politics not by way of an exact understanding of Clausewitz's argumentation; into such intellectual subtleties as the distinction between pure and real war etc. he does not enter at all and he also does not overlook the anthropological and cultural-philosophical background against which the thesis of the named essential unity is set up; as a Marxist he is convinced from the outset that the concept of conflict or struggle is much more comprehensive than that of war in the sense of organized armed or military confrontation, and accordingly he also understands Clausewitz's doctrine of the origin of war from politics, whereby he certainly hits the right mark. Also to the concept of politics he gives as a Marxist a different sense or rather a different content dimension than Clausewitz, but this does not hinder the agreement with the latter regarding the primacy of objective politics in the slightest.

But quite independently of the prerequisites under which Lenin arrives at his understanding of Clausewitz, its superiority over the Clausewitz interpretation currently prevailing in the West consists above all in the fact that in it politics does not appear as the moderating element that is supposed to tame war, but as a state of permanent struggle, from which from time to time wars must arise. The idea of struggle stands at the center of Lenin's political thought, he therefore notes that struggle can assume several forms, one of which is war;[916] politics (as it is conducted in peace) and war stand under the generic term of struggle, peace and struggle are thus not counter-concepts, peace and war are again so only in a certain respect: while struggles in peace are carried out without the use of organized armed force, war is a struggle which is characterized precisely by this use. As with Clausewitz, so too with Lenin the difference between war and peace is not identical with that between conflict and conflictlessness, but it corresponds to the difference between force and non-violence or between armed and unarmed

[916] Cf. Davis, *Lenin's Theory*, 36, 94, 97, 98 f.

striving for power. Accordingly, Lenin emphasizes, referring to or commenting on Clausewitz's formula, that war is the continuation of politics (conducted in peace) with "violent" means:[917] the criterion of the use of force thus draws the boundary line between politics in the state of peace and that in the state of war, but this criterion concerns exclusively the means respectively used in the two named states and not the essence of these states themselves. Only because in Lenin's eyes this essence consists on both sides in struggle, does he grasp in connection with Clausewitz politics and war as inseparable unity. He therefore notes down the General's sentence, according to which war is part of a whole, namely politics,[918] and in other places he makes clear how this is to be understood: "politics has generated war",[919] reads a marginal note by him, and with a double line he marks the following sentences referring to politics: "Moreover, it is the womb in which war develops; in it the lineaments of the same already lie indicated".[920] The meaning is clear: if politics and war as forms of struggle were not essentially related to one another, the emergence of war from the womb of politics would be impossible. War continues politics (of peacetime) by letting precisely the antagonisms already present in the latter be fought out with the means of organized armed force; Lenin rejects that view "which was mocked by Clausewitz about 80 years ago, namely that allegedly with the outbreak of war the historically prepared relationships between peoples and classes cease, that a completely different state enters".[921]

Since the character of the antagonisms in peace determines the general character of the war, it becomes understandable "that war can be a thing which is now more now less war." Lenin provides this sentence with the remark "Dialectics",[922] but he notes that "intensification" or "gradation" of the concept of war, which constitutes its "dialectics," also with regard to the concept of peace.[923] This means that not only the intensity of war, but also the tension in peacetime can increase or decrease, and that there is a general connection between that intensity and this tension, which may indeed assume different forms, but in general must remain. Inconceivable appears only a pure, i.e., conflict-free peace, which would then suddenly and abruptly turn into war. Lenin interprets Clausewitz's principle of war as continuation of politics rightly in the sense of a rejection of the "philistine and foolish prejudice" that war could be regarded "as a simple assault by which peace is broken," and adds emphatically: "Clausewitz

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[917] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 454 f.; *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 494.
[918] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 37.
[919] *Ibid.*, 39.
[920] *Ibid.*, 19.
[921] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 455 f.
[922] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 31.
[923] *Ibid.*, 35.

mocked that view: peacefully the peoples lived, then suddenly they fought!"[924] Just the opposite is testified by historical reality: "The epochs of wars teach us that peace in history has not infrequently played the role of a breathing space and of the gathering of forces for new battles".[925] Especially in the imperialist age, alliances in peace serve the preparation of wars and they arise in turn from the conditions which were created by wars; alliances and wars condition each other, peaceful and non-peaceful methods of struggle merge into one another, and this whole political chain of action grows out of the same system of positive and negative connections and relationships.[926] If the physiognomy of peace conditions the character of war, so too the outcome of war conditions the subsequent state of conflict which is called peace: "Just as every war is only a continuation of politics with means of force, namely of that politics which was conducted by the belligerent states and their ruling classes for long years, sometimes decades before the war, so too the peace concluding every war can only be a registration of the actual shifts in power which were achieved in the course and in the result of the war".[927] An imperialist war can accordingly lead only to an imperialist peace,[928] peace between capitalist states can "count only as a truce, as interruption, as preparation for new slaughter of peoples".[929]

In view of this essential unity of politics in peace and politics in war, or on the basis of the common subsumption of peace and war under a concept of politics that bears the mark of struggle, politics and war can be grasped merely as different degrees of intensity of the same fundamental relation of struggle. In an act of war (regardless of whether it is a revolution or an inter-state confrontation), nothing else takes place than a transformation of the political situation into a military one,[930] an elevation of the military question to the most important political question.[931] In the transition from politics to war, politics does not change, nor does it cease to be politics. "The ruling class determines policy even in war. War is through and through politics; it is the continuation of the realization of the same goals by the same class by other means".[932] Drawing on and commenting upon Clausewitz, Lenin rejects the view that politics and war are antithetical magnitudes, such that the assertion of the political factor would have to entail a restriction of the military one, and vice versa. He notes that the impression that a war would be all the more political the less tension and violence it contained is mere "appearance,"

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[924] *Krieg und Revolution* (1917) = *Ober Krieg*, I, 1, 99 f., 103.
[925] *Die Hauptaufgabe unserer Tage* (12. 3. 1918) = *Ober Krieg*, II, 1, 326.
[926] *Der Imperialismus . . .*. Kap. IX (*Kritik des Imperialismus*).
[927] *Vorschläge des ZK der SDAPR an die II. Sozialistische Konferenz* (1916) = *Ober Krieg*, I, 535.
[928] *Ibid.*
[929] *Um Brot und Frieden* (Dec. 14, 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 281.
[930] *Referat über die gegenwärtige Lage* (Nov. 13 [Oct. 31], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 265.
[931] *Brief an den Vorsitzenden des Gebietskomitees der Armee, der Flotte und der Arbeiter Finnlands* (Sept. 27 [Oct. 10], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 200.
[932] *Rede über den Krieg* (June 9 [22], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 128.

and he adds: "Appearance is not yet reality. War appears all the more "warlike" the more deeply political it is; and all the more "political" the less deeply political it is".[933] Here the word "warlike" is stripped of the odium attached to it by the indication that the sharpening of the warlike is the result and consequence of the political seriousness of a situation; where much or everything is at stake, matters cannot proceed harmlessly. Conversely, the word "political" is used with an ironic undertone in order to counter the opinion that true politics would consist in the striving for moderation or limitation of warlike exertion.

The second great commonality between Lenin and Clausewitz is, as said, the assumption of the primacy of objective politics, i.e., politics in the sense of "political intercourse" or "social conditions." Lenin thinks that Clausewitz takes a "step towards Marxism" when he excludes such factors as subjective intentions or moods from his concept of politics and sets up his analysis of the relationships between war and politics in such a way that it has nothing to do "with the ambition, the private interest, the vanity of the rulers".[934] A confirmation of this interpretation of the concept of politics in Clausewitz Lenin found in the following passage, which he copied out: "the general conditions from which a war proceeds and which naturally constitute its basis, determine also its character".[935] In the same direction pointed the historically oriented way of viewing of the Prussian military theorist, by which the Marxist Lenin must have felt particularly addressed: "every age has 'its own wars'", "'the peculiarities of every age' must be considered so that one understands the military leader," he notes down.[936] Precisely with regard to the historically deduced and grounded primacy of objective politics Lenin takes the right to consider the formula of war as continuation of politics as a principle that could just as well come from Marx and Engels: "The Marxists have rightly always considered this sentence as the theoretical basis of their views on the meaning of every concrete war. Marx and Engels have always judged the various wars from this and no other standpoint",[937] i.e., conceived "every war as a continuation of the politics of the respective interested powers—and of the various classes in them—in the respective period".[938] In the same breath Clausewitz is moved into the proximity of Hegel (his ideas were "fertilized by Hegel"), specifically with reference to the allegedly "dialectical" character of the formula, whereby however dialectics is understood primarily in the sense of a historical research and presentation method.[939]

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[933] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 16.
[934] *Ibid.*, 39.
[935] *Ibid.*, 25.
[936] *Ibid.*, 33.
[937] *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 494.
[938] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 454 f.
[939] *Ibid.*, cf. 453: "Dialectics requires the all-sided investigation of a given social phenomenon in its development as well as the reduction of the external and the apparent to the fundamental motive forces...". — Lenin evidently assumed an influence of Hegel on Clausewitz following an essay by

Lenin's interpretation of Clausewitz's formula in the light of the primacy of objective politics states that war continues not the politics of random persons with random attitudes, but the politics of collective historical subjects, i.e., of states or of classes, whose essence and activity in turn results with inner necessity from the structure of the respectively given phase of historical development: "War is the continuation of politics with other means. Every war is inseparably connected with the political order from which it springs. The same politics which a certain state, a certain class within this state has pursued for a long time before the war, precisely this class continues inevitably and unavoidably during the war, whereby it only changes the form of action".[940] Lenin attaches particular importance to the elimination of psychological and other factors in the research of war causes; he constantly asserts that "the social and political character of the war is not determined by the 'good will' of persons and groups or even peoples, but by the position of the class that wages the war, by the politics of which the war is the continuation".[941] The analysis of the economic causes of wars appears in this perspective—especially in view of the fundamental Marxist-Leninist definition of the historical collective subjects whose politics is continued by war, on the basis of their economic position and function—as the most suitable method to arrive at a purely objective illumination of the war problem, i.e., one disregarding subjective driving forces; the materialist conception of history in its stricter economistic version is supposed, in other words, to provide the solid methodological basis for the radical justification of the primacy of objective politics. Seen in this way, even diplomatic explanations of the etiology and course of wars remain stuck at the superficiality of subjectivist interpretations: "...the proof for the real social or, more correctly

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Mehring, which was published shortly before his own reading of Clausewitz and was certainly known to him as a regular reader of the *Neue Zeit*. In it was stated: "In his main work Clausewitz points out, quite in the spirit, if not in the language of Hegel...". A Marxist interpretation of the formula was also undertaken by K. Kautsky at the beginning of the war, which Lenin must have known: "War is never an isolated act... it is the inseparable concomitant... of every society built on class antagonisms. War is the discharge of historical antagonisms that have become so acute that there is no other means to settle them..." (*Vom Wesen des Krieges*, Nov. 20, 1914 = *Zur Kriegsgeschichte*, 291). War is "not a thing for itself... but an organic component of a policy..." (*ibid*., 292). Ancona has already pointed out the dependence of Lenin's Clausewitz reception on Mehring (*Der Einfluß*, 581 f., 584). It is not excluded that Mehring was stimulated to his comparison between Hegel and Clausewitz by Creuzinger's book published in 1911, although he apparently did not take the individual expositions from this confused writing, but only the basic motif. If that is true, then Creuzinger's work achieved its purpose, even if only imperceptibly and indirectly, i.e., via a much later Marxist-Leninist interpretation, which systematically inflated a fleeting suggestion by Mehring adopted and additionally emphasized by Lenin, and turned it into an ideologically motivated intellectual-historical and philosophical fiction. Thus Clausewitz is portrayed as a dialectical methodologist on the basis of daring comparisons... (s. e.g. Engelberg, *Clausewitz*, LX; Rothe-Türpe, *Das Wesen des Krieges*, esp. 1338 f.; Türpe, *Clausewitz' Verhältnis*, 535; Korfes, *Clausewitz' Werk*, LXIII; Savkin, *Operational Art*, 22, 23; Art. "Clausewitz" in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia, 361).

[940] *Krieg und Revolution* (1917) = *Über Krieg*, I, 100.

[941] *Aufgaben des Proletariats in unserer Revolution* (Sept. 1917) = Uber Krieg, II, 1,51.

said, the true class character of a war is of course not to be sought in the diplomatic history of the war, but from the analysis of the objective situation of the ruling classes in all belligerent states" taking into account the "totality of data on the foundations of economic life of all belligerent powers and of the whole world".[942] From the objective facts of the economy and not from the psyche of the individual do the war causes result; war under capitalism cannot be averted, "not because the individual capitalist is a bad person—every single one of them is just as much a person as all others—but... because private property has led to war and will always lead to war".[943] From the economic analysis of society and classes it can be clear from the outset which historical subject needs the war and will let its own politics flow into war: "To understand the war, one must ask: For whom is the war of advantage?"[944]

From the standpoint of the primacy of objective politics Lenin understood the First World War, by deriving its causes and its course from the physiognomy of the historical epoch: "One cannot understand the present war without understanding the epoch";[945] "this war has emerged from the conditions of an epoch in which capitalism has reached its highest stage of development".[946] To get to the bottom of the war events, one must "see the whole politics of the whole system of European states in their economic and political interrelations," the "decades-long politics of the two groups of belligerent countries" and "the connection of this war with the preceding politics," in order not to be misled by "individual examples," "individual cases" and "accidental circumstances".[947] If one takes seriously the principle that "every war is only the continuation of politics with other means," and uses it as an analytical instrument for the historical and sociological understanding of the World War, then the solution to the problem is obvious: it is "the continuation of the imperialist politics of two groups of great powers, and this politics was generated and nourished by the totality of the conditions of the imperialist epoch".[948] Seemingly important, but in reality irrelevant events, such as the violation of Belgian neutrality, did not determine the course of things, but decisive was the antagonism of the imperialist powers in a historical epoch in which capitalism could unfold only as imperialism: England, which had earlier outstripped France and Holland as colonial powers, now had to fight against the "rapid development" of a "young and strong robber," i.e., Germany, it was thus in plain text about "the division of the booty stolen together in both robber bands".[949] Lenin emphasizes again and again

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[942] *Der Imperialismus*... (Vorwort zur franz, u. deutschen Ausgabe, 1916) = Uber Krieg, I, 543.
[943] *Referat auf dem I. Gesamtruss.* Kongress der werktitigen Kosaken (1. 3.1920) = Ober Krieg, II, 2, 688.
[944] *Rede zur Resolution über den Krieg* (12. 5. [29.4.] 1917) = Ober Krieg, II, 1, 84.
[945] *Brief an Sinowjew* from August 1916 = *Über Krieg*, I, 580.
[946] *Resolution der Konferenz der Auslandssektionen der SDAPR* (March 29, 1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 434.
[947] *Krieg und Revolution* (1917) = *Über Krieg*, I, 101, 103.
[948] *Über das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (Sept 1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 602.
[949] *Krieg und Revolution* (1917) = *Über Krieg*, I, 105 f., 101.

that the war was not the result of ill will or a faulty politics, that one cannot hold individual persons responsible for its outbreak.[950] This acquittal is, however, not merely the logical consequence of the primacy of objective politics, but it also serves to demonstrate even more vividly the abominableness and reprehensibility of the entire imperialist system: if the guilt for the war were attributable to the actions and omissions of certain persons, one could merely replace these persons with others and thereby restore the peaceful functionality of the system without having to change it in its foundations. In this case, however, socialism would not be just as necessary as war itself is under the conditions of imperialism: "If imperialism were the guilt or the crime of individual persons, then socialism would be of no use".[951]

The commonalities between Clausewitz and Lenin have never been presented as we have attempted here, probably not least due to a deficient and erroneous understanding of Clausewitz which starts from the notion of politics as moderation and therefore from the assumption of a priority of subjective politics. Since, therefore, the commonalities between the two political thinkers and war theorists were not sought and found where they actually lie, commonalities have been constructed by making Lenin more or less a pupil of Clausewitz, who first determined the character of the great war on the basis of the formula, then derived from it the tasks of the revolutionary movement and finally, following strategic and tactical recipes that go back to Clausewitz, organized the uprising and won the Civil War.[952] This false representation of the relationships between Lenin and Clausewitz is based on a very one-sided view of the way in which revolutions are made and brought to a victorious conclusion, namely the organizational and conspiratorial aspect is overestimated, so that the impression can arise that a well-functioning general staff would be the decisive factor for success if it were only able to translate the right recipes into practice. Precisely to Clausewitz connoisseurs it should be familiar, however, that it depends not so much on the recipes themselves, but rather on the tact of judgment of those applying them. Not the knowledge of what Clausewitz wrote about attack and defense could guarantee that Lenin would correctly dose and coordinate attack and defense during the Civil War; on the basis of the same theoretical knowledge, but under the guidance of a false tact of judgment, the outcome could have turned out quite differently. If Lenin as a

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[950] *Ibid.*, 109; *Rede auf einer Kundgebung im Polytechnischen Museum in Moskau* (Aug 23, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 401.

[951] *Rede über den Krieg* (June 9 [22], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 129.

[952] See, e.g., *Possony, Jahrhundert*, 60: "Clausewitz taught the Bolsheviks the art of struggle"; cf. *Hahlweg* (*Lenin u. Clausewitz*, 628 f., 640), who contents himself with the statement that Lenin put Clausewitz's doctrines into practice and developed his "own strategy and tactics of revolution for the civil war". In Soviet literature, the influence of Clausewitz on Lenin's military practice is naturally played down in order not to endanger the independence of proletarian military science; Lenin is said to have sought in Clausewitz only the confirmation of certain Marxist principles (e.g., *Strokov, Istoriya*, 270; *Milovidov, Heritage*, 24).

strategist and tactician acquired anything from Clausewitz, then only what Clausewitz himself considered the only possible practical gain from the engagement with theory: a certain refinement of the tact of judgment. It is no different with the commonalities of our two war theorists explained above. What Lenin found of plausible war theory in Clausewitz, he already knew as a Marxist. As a Marxist he was convinced that war and peace or politics in war and politics in peace are not antithetical magnitudes, but equally subject to the laws of (class) struggle; and as a Marxist he likewise viewed war from the beginning as violent continuation of the politics of certain historical subjects. This can incidentally be proven without difficulty. Already in early political articles and long before he gained knowledge of Clausewitz's formula, he posed questions from his Marxist perspective which anticipate almost *ipsis verbis* those posed during the First World War with reference to Clausewitz. When in 1900 the Boxer Rebellion in China was put down with the help of Russian troops, Lenin asked: "How must the socialists relate to this war? In whose interest is it waged? What is the real meaning of the politics pursued by the Russian government?"[953]

Just as the commonalities of Lenin with Clausewitz did not first result from Lenin's reading of Clausewitz, but were laid out in the already established Marxist attitude of the Russian, so too the differences between the two existed from the beginning and remained undiminished even after Lenin's engagement with the General's work. Lenin hinted at them, to be sure, but only fleetingly and partially, since in his Clausewitz study he concentrated almost exclusively on the points which aroused his interest in the positive sense; therefore they must first be reconstructed. The differences in the cultural and historical-philosophical as well as anthropological premises of the two thinkers are so clear that any word about them is superfluous. But the implications of this fundamental difference for the question of the relationship between war and politics require a brief discussion. If an end to wars appears in Lenin's historical-philosophical perspective, it is because here an abolition of classes is considered possible, indeed historically necessary. This means that the phenomenon of war is primarily connected with the division of human societies into classes and not, for instance, with the conflict between peoples, nations and states, which in turn are regarded as social formations corresponding to certain forms and stages of class formation and will likewise be abolished or lose any political relevance with the abolition of classes. This precedence of the class idea implies, however, that the causes of wars are to be traced back primarily to domestic political factors—and precisely the primacy of domestic politics opens up the historical-philosophical perspective of an abolition of wars in the future classless society. While for Clausewitz the domestic political antagonisms have to subordinate themselves to the higher command of the assertion of the nation or the state, since he sees in the nation or the state the common

[953] *Der China-Krieg* (Dec 1900) = *Über Krieg*, I, 19; cf. 21: "whom does this policy benefit? it benefits a handful of big capitalists etc."

denominator of the interests of all members of the given collective regardless of their class affiliation, Lenin as a Marxist remains convinced that nation and state direct their politics mainly or exclusively according to the interests of the ruling class, whereby the oppressed classes of different nations or states have more common interests with each other than with their "own" ruling classes. A fundamentally different conception of the nature of human cohabitation thus leads to fundamentally different judgments regarding the primacy of domestic or foreign politics. Of course, the domestic political situation of a nation or a state connects also for Clausewitz with the physiognomy of every war, and indeed closely and directly—but not in the sense that the war serves the interests of the domestically ruling classes, but in the sense that every society must wage war with the means and in the manner as its general level of development permits or commands. It is assumed fundamentally, however, that every people by and large stands united behind its government and should do so, while Lenin welcomes national unity only in "just" or "progressive" wars—it is not a value and not a desideratum in itself. When Clausewitz registers the transformation of cabinet war into people's war by the French Revolution, Lenin notes the passage to add in the margin that the "people" spoken of here was actually only the bourgeoisie.[954] The class-wise differentiated concept of the people is thereby contrasted with the undifferentiated one, which incidentally implies that an intensification of the concept of the people must entail an intensification of the people's war: if namely the people in the sense of the broad mass of the oppressed take part in the war not in the service of the ruling class, but for their own purposes, then this true people's war must *eo ipso* transform into a class war and give a corresponding turn to an interstate war currently in progress. But we will come back to this immediately.

Mindful of the primacy of the class idea and the associated primacy of domestic politics in Lenin, we can now reconstruct his implicit differences to Clausewitz with regard to the understanding of the formula of war as continuation of politics. The agreement between the two rests, as we saw, on their interpretation of the concept of politics in the objective sense, i.e., in the sense of "social conditions" or "political intercourse." The differences come to light as soon as the question arises which aspects or elements of political intercourse continue in war, provoke the war. In Clausewitz, political intercourse, if we understand by it the socio-economic magnitudes, conditions the general form of warfare, these magnitudes do not yield in themselves, however, the deeper *causa belli*, which rather springs from an anthropologically rooted self-assertion or power striving. In Lenin, however, the socio-economic magnitudes condition not only the type of warfare, but also the deeper causes of wars, so that foreign policy in the form of war represents a necessary prolongation of the war-generating internal structure of a country. Clausewitz attaches no great importance to this structure as a war-generating

[954] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 34.

factor because he believes that anyway every collective wages war and will wage war; Lenin's belief that wars could be abolished under certain circumstances drives him conversely to concentrate on the socio-economic factors which are supposed to generate wars, whose change would therefore have to entail an abolition of wars. The term "politics" implies of course for both thinkers struggle and conflict—otherwise politics would never be able to provoke wars or rather have to. What distinguishes them from one another is therefore not the fact that Clausewitz understands peace as a conflict-free state, but only that Lenin attributes the reasons for conflicts—whether in peace or in war—fundamentally to domestic political and socio-economic factors. If Lenin unhinged the *ius publicum europaeum*, this does not mean that Clausewitz represented the same in pure form—if it ever existed at all.[955]

In summary, it can be said that there are two central differences between Lenin and Clausewitz, in which the irreconcilable contrast of their ideological and historical-philosophical positions is reflected: one of them concerns the state or class character of politics, whose continuation war is, the other the primacy of domestic or foreign politics.[956]

These differences have in turn two profound theoretical and practical implications: if wars between states are ultimately to be traced back to the domestic political structure or the class structure of these same states, if thus war and domestic politics are originally and causally

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[955] This must be emphasized against authors who all too abruptly contrast Lenin's ultimately "uncompromising" and "destructive" politics with Clausewitz's "moderate" politics, see, e.g., *Schmitt, Lenin und Clausewitz*, esp. 249, 252 f.

[956] These two differences are pointed out almost stereotypically in Soviet publications (see, e.g., *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 14; Milovidov, *Heritage*, 40; article "Clausewitz" in the Soviet *Encyclopedia of War*, 360; Savkin, *Operational Art*, 23 f.). The difference between Lenin's concept of politics and that of Clausewitz was, incidentally, emphasized relatively early in the Soviet Union; see White, *Soviet Philosophy of War*, 324. After the Second World War, Clausewitz was frequently portrayed as a representative of Prussian-German militarism and his significance as a theorist of war was downgraded (see evidence in Garthoff, *Doctrine*, 454, n. 67). At that time Stalin maintained that the German militaristic ideology—among whose apologists he also counted Clausewitz—had failed the test of war; Clausewitz, he said, represented the manufactory age of war, whereas we now found ourselves in the machine age (*An Answer*, 24). With de-Stalinization there began a more positive assessment of Clausewitz, which was announced in an article by Rasin (see list of cited works). This reassessment, however, remained limited, and the "militaristic," "idealist," and "reactionary" aspects of Clausewitz's thought continued to be emphasized alongside the "positive" ones (see, e.g., article "Clausewitz" in the Soviet *Encyclopedia of War*, 361; Milovidov, *Heritage*, 43 f.). At times, the downgrading of Clausewitz goes hand in hand with a glorification of the Russian military tradition (on Suvorov as a precursor and even teacher of Napoleon, see Savkin, *Operational Art*, 13 ff., 132 f., 206 ff., 243 ff.). The rehabilitation of Clausewitz also met with reservations in the German Democratic Republic, where warnings were issued against trivializing the "feudal-bourgeois" aspects of the reformers' thought (Rehm, *Clausewitz in the GDR*, 376, 364). On the reception of Clausewitz in the German Democratic Republic within the framework of socialist cultivation of tradition, see Maaß, *Clausewitz Image*, esp. 100 ff.

connected with one another, then there is no reason not to classify armed conflicts which take place only inside a country, i.e., civil wars, as wars in the full sense of the word; and if again wars are the continuation of a class politics which can appear as foreign as well as domestic politics, then there are no boundaries between wars abroad and wars at home, the war between states can transform into a war between classes of the same state and vice versa.

Both implications have been understood and explained by Lenin with all desirable clarity. Regarding the sociological characteristic of civil wars he wrote: "Civil wars are also wars. Whoever recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society represent a natural, under certain circumstances inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle".[957] The commonalities of interstate war and civil war are not limited only to the genetic aspect, i.e., to their common origin from the class structure of society; they concern equally their structure and their course. Like interstate war, so too civil war has its prehistory. It forms the climax and the intensification of conflicts which accumulate on several levels until they reach the explosion point. Civil war is thus, in Lenin's words, "the sharpest form of class struggle..., where a series of economic and political battles and clashes repeat, accumulate, expand and sharpen themselves so long until these clashes transform into the armed struggle of one class against the other".[958] The similarity, indeed identity of the combat situation in interstate war and in civil war suggests, however, a uniformity of combat behavior in both cases, even requires it. If "a revolutionary epoch is for social democracy the same as wartime is for the army",[959] then the revolutionary masses, which make up the troops of social democracy, must learn "that in war one must act according to the rules of war. The masses of workers... will recognize themselves as a belligerent party".[960] From this consideration of the mechanics and dynamics of civil war arises understandably the inclination to grasp the revolutionary struggle in military categories and in connection with it to speak of general staffs, troops, battles, assaults and sieges.[961] And in fact one can survive in civil war just as little as in interstate war if one is not familiar with the art of warfare. Of course, the art of waging this kind of war is a very peculiar one, and this peculiarity is shaped even more strongly by the fact that it cannot be learned from the outset, i.e., before the civil war, but only during the same: "the proletariat will also learn the art of civil war after it has once begun the revolution. Revolution is war".[962] And belligerent remains also the successful revolution, at least in its first phase, which according to Lenin is to be a "democratic dictatorship": this is "not an organization of 'order', but

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[957] *Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 603.
[958] *Die russische Revolution und der Bürgerkrieg* (Sept 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 169.
[959] *Neue Aufgaben und neue Kräfte* (March 8 [Feb 23], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 98.
[960] *Revolutionstage* (Jan 31 [18], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 75.
[961] Such expressions are found already in Lenin's early writings, see, e.g., *Über Krieg*, I, 15, 28 f., 36, 98; cf. *Schmitt, Lenin und Clausewitz*, 243 ff.
[962] *Revolutionstage* (Jan 31 [18], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 73.

an organization of war. Even if we conquered Petersburg and guillotined Nicholas, we would have a Vendée before us".[963]

Also the second of the above-mentioned implications was clear to Lenin from the beginning. Already at the time of the Russo-Japanese War he thought about the existing possibilities of exploiting the defeat of his own government as a catalyst of a revolution.[964] And it is known that since the outbreak of the First World War the concept of a transformation of the war between imperialist states into a series of proletarian revolutions stood at the center of his political deliberations. In September 1914 he wrote: "The transformation of the present imperialist war into civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan".[965] And a year later: "In fact this war creates a revolutionary situation... The imperialist war opens the era of social revolution".[966] The transformation of interstate war into civil war seemed possible not only due to the "heavy burdens" which "the war imposed on the proletariat",[967] but also because of the character of modern war as "people's war"; the participation of the popular masses in the war cannot, however, mean from the view of revolutionary politics in wartime "that one should swim with the 'popular' stream of chauvinism, but that the class antagonisms by which the peoples are torn apart will continue to exist and appear also in wartime, also in war and adapted to war".[968] But so that popular participation in the war does not lead to a strengthening of chauvinism, but to the unleashing of revolutionary energy, an additional condition must be added, namely the loss of authority of those governments which want to numb the popular masses with the opium of chauvinism, which is possible only through a military defeat: "Revolution during war is civil war, but the transformation of the war of governments into civil war is facilitated on the one hand by military failures (by the 'defeat') of governments, on the other hand it is factually impossible to strive for such a transformation without contributing thereby to the defeat".[969] The fact that the success of the Bolsheviks in 1917 was largely attributable to the war situation and at least partially to the adherence to the policy of revolutionary defeatism stimulated Lenin to conceive the inner togetherness of war and revolution in a somewhat hasty generalization as a quasi-historical law: "Has there ever been a great revolution in history that was not connected

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[963] *Der III. Parteitag der SDAPR (Über die Teilnahme der Sozialdemokratie an einer Provisorischen Revolutionären Regierung, April 18 [May 1], 1905)* = *Über Krieg*, I, 133.
[964] *Der Fall von Port Arthur* (Jan 14 [1], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 66.
[965] *Der Krieg und die russische Sozialdemokratie* (written before Sept 28 [Oct 11], 1914) = *Über Krieg*, I, 404.
[966] *Revolutionsentwurf der Zimmerwalder Linken* (written before Aug 20 [Sept 2], 1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 522.
[967] *Op. cit.* (note 58), 403.
[968] *Lage und Aufgaben der sozialistischen Internationale* (Nov 1, 1914) = *Über Krieg*, I, 415.
[969] *Über die Niederlage der eigenen Regierung* (July 26, 1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 484; cf. *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915), *op. cit.*, 505: "The revolutionary class can wish for nothing else in a reactionary war than the defeat of its own government, it cannot overlook the connection between military failures of the government and the facilitation of its overthrow."

with war? Of course not! We live not in a state, but in a system of states".[970] In other cases, however, he treated revolutions which arose from a war as a special, and indeed as a historically particularly burdened category.[971]

[970] *Der VIII. Parteitag der KP Rußlands, Bericht des ZK* (March 18, 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 482.
[971] *Prophetische Worte* (July 2, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 348: "...that a revolution after a war, a revolution which is connected with war (and which moreover ... has flared up during a war, which is compelled to grow and assert itself while surged around by the world war), that such a revolution is a particularly difficult case of birth."

3. Function and Typology of War

As with Marx and Engels, so too with Lenin the historical function of war is judged in the double perspective of the given historical-philosophical basic framework: wars are indeed bound to the existence of classes and they will cease as soon as classes disappear, in the practically politically solely decisive intermediate time, however, they are viewed purely purposefully, i.e., depending on whether they are suitable to advance the respectively desired short- and long-term development or not. And in this question there is no doubt at all: wars and force in general can belong to the great historical driving forces, so that their moral and sweeping condemnation must spring from mere political and historical ignorance and naivety. Only "sentimental parsons," declares Lenin, manage not to see the necessities prevailing in war, and this precisely "in a time when history wants to have the greatest problems of humanity solved by struggle and war".[972] The war produces indeed "crisis, famine and nameless misery in unprecedented extent," but it does not cease therefore to be "a historical driving force of immense strength," which forces the peoples "to strain all forces to the utmost," by bringing them "into an unbearable situation" and demonstrating the inevitability of radical measures to overcome extraordinary difficulties.[973] Still more: wars pass the final judgment of history on the viability of social systems: "It has long been recognized that wars, with all the horrors and miseries they entail, bring more or less great benefit by ruthlessly exposing, unveiling and destroying much that is rotten, obsolete and dead in human institutions."[974] "The strength or weakness of the institutions and arrangements of every people is determined by the outcome of the war and its consequences".[975] Wars are of course not waged with the intention of exposing one's own weaknesses and committing suicide in knowledge of one's own inability for historical survival; especially under the conditions of capitalism they belong to the functioning of the system, i.e., they restore destroyed equilibria and in this very process they ruin the outdated and obsolete: "To test the actual power of a capitalist state, there is no other means and there can be no other means than war".[976]

This view of the historical function of war was already established for Lenin at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, which showed the "inner rot" and the "agony of old Russia"[977] and was therefore "a severe judgment".[978] Once again here the fact that modern wars are "waged by the peoples," i.e., are people's wars, proved decisive with regard to the revolutionizing effect of war.

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[972] *Brief an die amerikanischen Arbeiter* (Aug 22, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 388 f.
[973] *Briefe aus der Ferne*, III (March 11 [24], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 26 f.
[974] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 444.
[975] *Bedauern und Scham* (May 7, 1911) = *Über Krieg*...
[976] *Über die Losung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa* (Aug 23, 1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 516.
[977] *Der 1. Mai* (1904) = *Über Krieg*, I, 52.
[978] *Die Katastrophe* (June 9 [May 27], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 151.

The mismatch between government and people, which until then was "visible" only to a small conscious minority, was now exposed before the eyes of the people directly involved in the war and therefore experiencing the obsoleteness and incompetence of the government on their own body.[979] The function of war in history is thus shown from a second aspect: by the war not only the old is irrevocably ruined, but at the same time also the new is formed, in that the forces representing it become aware of their abilities in the struggle itself and gradually learn to set their own goals and to act independently for their attainment: "Through the experience of war... the ones are dulled and broken, but the others are enlightened and steeled, whereby in the history of the whole world by and large the number and strength of the latter, with the exception of special cases of decline and ruin of this or that state, have proven to be greater than the former".[980] A war which serves as baptism of fire and proving ground of the forces of the new is "not only a continuation of politics, but also its summation and at the same time a political instruction".[981] Just as the old ruler betrayed his inability to rule not least by his inability for effective warfare, so now the prospective one must also reveal his ruling qualities by his war achievements: this means that the ruling class, the proletariat, if it wants to rule and will rule, must also prove this by its military organization.[982]

A third aspect of the historical function of war lies for Lenin in the acceleration of long-term political and economic processes. Apparently with regard to the practice of war economy in both belligerent camps, Lenin opined that the First World War had accelerated the economic decline of capitalism insofar as it vigorously promoted the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism; but if the former corresponded to the stage of imperialism, the latter forms the "immediate prelude to socialism".[983] Also in the past, however, there would have been wars "which despite all horrors, bestialities, suffering and torments inevitably linked with every war, were progressive, i.e., brought benefit to the development of mankind," by bringing down e.g. absolutism or serfdom directly or indirectly.[984] Already in the Russo-Japanese War Lenin had been able to observe how this happened. The backwardness which the rule of Tsarism meant for Russia had proven "to be an obstacle to a modern organization of the army system meeting the newest requirements," for "the connection between the military organization of a country and its entire economic and cultural structure has never been so close as at present. The military collapse had therefore to become the

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[979] *Der Fall von Port Arthur* (Jan 14 [1], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 63.
[980] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 451.
[981] *Der VII. gesamtrussische Sowjetkongreß* (Report of the Executive Central Committee, Dec 5, 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 640.
[982] *Der VIII. Parteitag der KPR (B), Bericht des ZK* (March 1919) = *Über Krieg*, I, 2, 482.
[983] *Krieg und Revolution* (1917); *Staat und Revolution* (Preface); *Um Brot und Frieden* (Dec 14, 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 119, 149, 281.
[984] *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 489.

beginning of a deep-seated political crisis. The war of an advanced against a backward country has this time too, as already so many times in history, played a great revolutionary role".[985]

If war is an "inevitable and inseparable companion of every class rule in general",[986] an "equally lawful form of capitalist life as peace" and "no accident, no 'sin', as the Christian parsons believe",[987] then the hopes for disarmament, as long as class and capitalist societies exist, must be designated as "reactionary, philistine illusions of the petty-bourgeois democrats".[988] Whoever raises such "nebulous-pacifist" demands, understands not the connection between politics and class rule, but thinks on the basis of such abstract schemata as: "war is an evil, peace a blessing".[989] The "proletarian" questioning of peace differs, however, fundamentally from the "bourgeois-democratic" one; the slogan "peace at any price" is unacceptable because thereby the fact is covered up that every peace, like every war, pursues certain goals.[990] And just as there is no moral duty to defend peace at any price, so there is no moral duty to condemn war as such, especially since, apart from the inevitability of war, history has also known just wars. The concept of just war has therefore exclusively to do with the war purposes, not with the warfare: "During a war it seems ridiculous to speak of 'rights', for every war puts direct and immediate force in the place of right";[991] civil war, which is also war,[992] must do the same, nevertheless "any moral condemnation of civil war is inadmissible from the standpoint of Marxism".[993] War against war can therefore not be waged with the help of moral arguments and peaceful means, the "parson-sentimental and foolish sighing for 'peace at any price'" must remain ineffective, conscientious objection and strike as means to prevent war are again "simply a stupidity" and "cowardly dream".[994] "Only after we have completely defeated... the bourgeoisie in the whole world, will wars become impossible".[995]

Invalidity and practical irrelevance of moralizing about war and peace become even clearer in view of the factual blurring of the boundaries between these two political states. Lenin believes neither in the peaceful settlement of serious conflicts of interest nor in the possibility of a separate national existence in peace. He reminds those who dream of binding arbitration courts and permanent neutrality of the violation of Belgian neutrality and mocks the "illusionary and

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[985] *Der Fall von Port Arthur* (Jan 14 [1], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 64, 65.
[986] *Op. cit.*, 65.
[987] *Lage und Aufgaben der sozialistischen Internationale* (Nov 1, 1914) = *Über Krieg*, I, 415.
[988] *Programmentwurf der KPR* (March 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 479.
[989] *Rede zur Resolution über den Krieg* (May 12 [April 29], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 82.
[990] *Das europäische Kapital und die Selbstherrschaft* (April 5 [March 23], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 109 f.
[991] *Antwort an P. Kijewski* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 583.
[992] *Op. cit.*, 586.
[993] *Der Partisanenkrieg* (Sept 30, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 300.
[994] *Lage und Aufgaben der sozialistischen Internationale* (Nov 1, 1914) = *Über Krieg*, I, 415 f.
[995] *Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 601.

reactionary" character of the "small-state wanting-to-be-aside" and of the "petty-bourgeois striving to stay away from great world struggles".[996] He takes, in other words, not seriously the fiction that rules of international law would prevail which neatly separate belligerents from non-belligerents and could prescribe binding rights and duties to the former as well as the latter. The relatively long peace in Europe before 1914 allowed such fictions to arise, but it was itself a fiction insofar as it was based in reality on a mere shift of the theater of war: "Peace reigned in Europe, but it was maintained because the rule of the European peoples over the hundreds of millions of inhabitants of the colonies was realized only by constant, uninterrupted, never-ending wars, which we Europeans do not consider wars, since they have often been similar not to wars, but to the bestial murder, the extermination of defenseless peoples".[997] Thereby many of these colonial wars were not even declared, to the glory of the universally celebrated international law, which of course "did not change the slightest thing about the essence of the matter".[998] Even more blurred become the boundaries between belligerents and non-belligerents in civil war, which constitutes a much more complicated phenomenon than interstate war.[999] The forms of struggle are here more manifold, number and connection of the combatants remain indeterminate and fluctuate, while "the attempts to conclude peace or even only armistice... intertwine in the most peculiar way with the combat actions".[1000] In short, in civil war the whole impossibility of a neat separation between combatants and non-combatants, the whole pointlessness of an attempt to escape the all-devouring behemoth by calm waiting or declarations of neutrality is shown: "Civil war knows no neutrals".[1001]

Based on these prerequisites it is only natural that when Lenin designs a typology of war, it does not occur to him at all to use, for instance, the distinction between limited and unlimited wars as a fundamental criterion. His theoretical guideline is rather the thesis of war as continuation of politics with other means, and the concrete historical area of application of his war typology the age of imperialism; a short sociological characterization of the European national wars of the 19th century is indeed also undertaken, but this serves rather to work out more clearly the specific character of wars in the age of imperialism by comparison and contrasting of certain features.[1002] During his reading of Clausewitz Lenin underlined the sentences in which it says that only the insight into the unity of politics and war teaches us to

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[996] *Op. cit.*, 608.
[997] *Krieg und Revolution* (May 14 [27], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 101.
[998] *Der China-Krieg* (Dec 1900) = *Über Krieg*, I, 19.
[999] *Ein neuer Aufschwung* (May 6, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 270.
[1000] *Zwischen zwei Schlachten* (Nov 25 [12], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 232.
[1001] *Op. cit.*, 234.
[1002] The connection of Lenin's theory of war to his analysis of imperialism is rightly emphasized by Davis, *Lenin's Theory*, esp. 33 f.

understand "how different wars must be according to the nature of their motives and the conditions from which they proceed".[1003] This was of course easily received in the light of what he already knew as a Marxist, only to be translated again into Marxist language: "From the Marxist standpoint one must determine the political content of a war in every single case and for every war separately. But how does one determine the political content of a war? Every war is the continuation of a politics".[1004] From the application of this criterion to the individual wars of the imperialist age it results now that these can be divided *grosso modo* into two large categories, so that at least the purpose of a first political orientation in the named age can be satisfied. "War is the continuation of politics. One must study the politics before the war, the politics that led to the war and brought it about. Was the politics imperialist..., then the war too, which results from this politics, is an imperialist war. Was the politics a politics of national liberation..., then the war too, which results from this politics, is a national liberation war".[1005] This dichotomy of wars in the imperialist age forms actually the historical and sociological specification of a much older dichotomy of all wars of history, in which distinction was simply made between wars in the interest of the ruling class and those against the oppressors.[1006] We will see immediately that and how this older and general dichotomy was put in close connection with the later one specially related to the imperialist age.

The first large category of wars in the imperialist age are thus the imperialist wars. "Every war in which both belligerent camps oppress foreign countries or peoples and fight for the distribution of the booty..., must be called imperialist".[1007] In this general sense there have been, according to Lenin, imperialist wars both on the soil of the ancient slave system (war of Rome against Carthage e.g.) and in the Middle Ages and in the epoch of mercantile capitalism.[1008] A confusion of modern imperialist wars with earlier ones would nevertheless be out of place, for the former are connected with quite specific characteristics of the highly developed capitalist economy, specifically with the overproduction crises, which can only sharpen the struggle for shares in the world market. The World War is thus a modern imperialist war both regarding its causes and regarding the objectives of both camps; by being waged at the highest stage of development of capitalism, it signals *eo ipso* its end (of the acceleration of state-monopolistic

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[1003] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 17.
[1004] *Offener Brief an B. Souvarine* (Dec 1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 654.
[1005] *Über eine Karikatur auf den Marxismus...* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 591.
[1006] *Revolutionäre Armee und revolutionäre Regierung* (July 10 [June 27], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 162. Just wars, such as the Spartacus War, already existed in the epoch of slavery, see Speech of Aug 23, 1918, *op. cit.*, II, 1, 399.
[1007] *Zur Revision des Parteiprogramms* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 226.
[1008] *Op. cit.*

tendencies by it we already spoke) and therefore assumes an extremely reactionary character,[1009] so that now only the socialist revolution can clear the path of history forward. If, in other words, capitalist development has once reached this stage, then the character of wars between capitalist states must change, even if the belligerent nations or states have remained the same outwardly. Against the attempts of the "social chauvinists," especially the German ones, to apply the makeup of progressiveness and struggle for democracy to their support of their own government in the war, Lenin asserts that now the conflicts of the great European powers with one another can fulfill no positive historical task. The Napoleonic wars shook feudalism, the Prussian-French war brought about the fall of the reactionary Bonapartist regime and the unification of Germany, although plunder and conquest were not absent each time.[1010] In general, the wars from the end of the 18th century and of the whole 19th century were national wars, which accompanied and promoted the creation of national states as a necessary phase in the development of capitalism and necessary basis for the development of productive forces.[1011] There can therefore be no comparisons between the war as continuation of the anti-feudal and anti-absolutist politics of the liberating bourgeoisie and the war as continuation of the politics of the "senile, i.e., the imperialist bourgeoisie".[1012] In the history of the bourgeoisie after the French Revolution three large phases can be distinguished from one another according to Lenin, which go hand in hand with corresponding changes in the character of its wars: the phase of the rise and full victory of the bourgeoisie (1789–1871), the phase of full rule and beginning decline of the now finance-capitalist bourgeoisie (1871 to 1914) and the phase of the great upheaval by imperialist wars and revolutions from 1914 on.[1013] During the first of these phases the question of its attitude to this or that war posed itself for the revolutionary movement exclusively under the viewpoint on the side of which bourgeoisie a victory would be most desirable; on the basis of this time-bound criterion Marx and Engels historically and politically judged the European wars of the 19th century,[1014] and therefore their statements on those wars cannot be transferred to the age of the "reactionary, outlived" bourgeoisie.[1015] With a side glance at the theoretical rationalization of the German war against Russia on the part of German Social Democracy, Lenin combats particularly emphatically the view that Engels' statements of 1891 about the eventual necessity of a war against Russia could be applied to the situation of 1914: in 1891 Germany was still the country of the most advanced labor movement threatened by Tsarism, in

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[1009] "Imperialist war is, so to speak, a threefold negation of democracy: a) every war replaces 'rights' with force; b) imperialism is the negation of democracy in general; c) imperialist war makes republics completely equal to monarchies", *Antwort an P. Kijewski* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 585.
[1010] *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 490.
[1011] *Proletariat und Krieg* (Oct 25/27, 1914) = *Über Krieg*, I, 406 f.
[1012] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 457.
[1013] *Unter fremder Flagge* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 430.
[1014] *Op. cit.*, 431 f.
[1015] *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 498 f.

1914 it waged a war for world domination, while Tsarism had already since 1905 lost the ability for foreign policy adventures.[1016] In the present imperialist war therefore no reason justified the support of one of the belligerent sides. Also the progressive national element plays no important role in it; it is indeed represented by Serbia's war against Austria, in the overall context of the war, however, this isolated aspect cannot be decisive: the socialists could have granted their support to the national liberation war of Serbia only if this were not linked with the "selfish and predatory goals" of England, Russia etc.[1017]

But if the national element in this case is covered by heterogeneous factors and cannot provide the basis of a progressive political struggle, the national liberation wars on the other hand form in their totality an important and considerable part of the second category of those wars which are unavoidable in the imperialist age. For imperialism produces its negation precisely at the moment when it actualizes its own essence. It oppresses nations and thus ignites national wars, it unleashes imperialist wars and consequently inflames revolutions and civil wars. National wars, civil wars and wars waged by socialist states against capitalist forces turn jointly against imperialist politics and imperialist war and make up the threefold shape which just war assumes in the age of imperialism.[1018] From the finding of the possibility and reality of these three kinds of just war in the present Lenin derives his main argument against that disarmament demand which started from the idea that in future only reactionary or unjust wars could take place.[1019] Weapons and war serve, however, under certain circumstances also the good cause: "socialists cannot be against every war without ceasing to be socialists".[1020] The policy of revolutionary defeatism, which represents a self-evident command for the socialists of a belligerent imperialist state, becomes nonsensical and catastrophic when it concerns just wars, defensive wars, revolutionary wars; fatherland defense is, in other words, betrayal of socialism in the case of an imperialist war and socialist duty in the case of a war of oppressed peoples against the imperialist great powers or a war of the victorious proletariat of a country against the capitalist environment.[1021] Another realistic attitude to the war question is inconceivable if one recognizes the inevitability of both national wars and socialist revolutions in the imperialist age and searches for a policy that can take account of this inevitability: "National wars of the colonies and semi-colonies are in the epoch of imperialism... inevitable... Every war is a

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[1016] *Brief an Ines Armand* of Jan 19, 1917 = *Über Krieg*, I, 665.
[1017] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 470 f.; cf. the *Brief an A.M. Kollontai* (Summer 1915), *op. cit.*, 518. Zinoviev identifies himself with the Leninist analysis of the character of European wars after 1789 and the war of 1914, *Der Krieg*, esp. 60 ff., 67.
[1018] *Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 600 f.; cf. *Brief an Sinowjew* (Aug 1916), *op. cit.*, 581.
[1019] *Über die Junius-Broschüre* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 572.
[1020] *Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 599.
[1021] *Op. cit.*, 601 f.; *Brief an Sinowjew* (Aug 1916), *op. cit.*, 581.

continuation of politics with other means. The continuation of the politics of national liberation in the colonies will inevitably be national wars of the colonies against imperialism".[1022] Wars between Morocco and France, India and England, Persia or China and Russia, would be defensive wars on the part of the first-named countries, and indeed "independently of who attacked first".[1023] This all applies *a fortiori* to eventual wars of the victorious proletariat of a country against the hostile capitalist states. The inevitability of the socialist revolution results generally from the crisis of the imperialist system and at the same time from the maturity of capitalist development. This development is, however, uneven, and from the "law" of the uneven development of capitalism it follows that the socialist revolution could prevail initially in few capitalist countries or even only in a single one. The victorious proletariat of this country would then have to come into conflict with the capitalist states, it "would attract the oppressed classes of the other countries to its side, in these countries fan the flame of uprising against the capitalists and if necessary even proceed with armed force against the working classes and their states".[1024] In such a case "a war on our part would be legitimate and just".[1025] From the standpoint of the victorious proletariat the recognition of the necessity of fatherland defense is tantamount to the recognition of the justice of the war to be waged.[1026] For the war forms now the continuation of a revolutionary politics, it is a revolutionary war which must and shall be waged: "we are no pacifists and cannot reject a revolutionary war".[1027]

In the previous section we discussed Lenin's considerations on the possibility of the transformation of an interstate war into civil war and revolution. With this connects his conviction that the whole character of an imperialist war can change in the course of this same war; if that transformation actually takes place, then the politics of which the war is the continuation changes fundamentally, and the reactionary or unjust war becomes progressive and just. The dialectic of historical conflicts thus enables a transition from the one large category of wars of the imperialist age to the other. For Lenin it stands firm, however, that as the final result of overall historical development only a transition from the reactionary to the progressive category can come into question. That setbacks, and indeed long-term ones, are quite possible, is however expressly admitted. A national war can turn into an imperialist one as well as vice versa. Through the Napoleonic wars a transformation of the initially national-revolutionary wars of the young French Republic into imperialist ones occurred, which in turn called forth national wars as a reaction to themselves. With regard to the imperialist war of 1914 Lenin

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[1022] *Über die Junius-Broschüre* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 571.
[1023] *Sozialismus und Krieg* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 490 f.
[1024] *Über die Losung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa* (Aug 23, 1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 517.
[1025] *Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 601. Lenin refers here to Engels' letter to Kautsky of Sept 12, 1882, see above IV, note 242.
[1026] *Über ‚linke' Kindereien und über Kleinbürgerlichkeit* (May 9, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 337.
[1027] *Referat zur politischen Lage* (April 24 [May 7], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 73.

opined that its most probable outcome was its transformation into a civil war or revolutionary war. He did not exclude, however, a large national war in the case of a crushing defeat of the proletariat: "That would be a regression of Europe by a few decades. That is improbable. But it is not impossible, for to believe that world history goes smoothly and evenly forward, without sometimes making giant leaps backward, is undialectical, unscientific, theoretically incorrect".[1028]

It was mentioned casually above that Lenin calls all just wars defensive wars, regardless of who attacks first. This implies a distinction between the political and the strategic concept of attack or defense. And in fact, Lenin had registered this distinction during his reading of Clausewitz and noted the expression "the 'politically' attacker"; Clausewitz's contrasting of political and strategic concept of defense likewise attracted his attention.[1029] Also in this case, of course, the idea itself did not originate from Clausewitz, but the stimulus for a clear conceptual grasp of it. For already in 1908 Lenin had written that "not the offensive or defensive character of the war, but the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat" should provide the "only possible standpoint" for the political judgment of a war:[1030] here the terms "attack" and "defense" are obviously used only in their common strategic sense. The question occupied Lenin systematically since the outbreak of the First World War, when one of his main theoretical concerns applied to the refutation of an argument of the "social chauvinists," namely that fatherland defense would be commanded because the fatherland had been attacked. Lenin's answer to this is the decoupling of just war and defensive war (in the strategic sense) and the exclusive binding of the concept of just war to the defensive war in the political-historical sense, which however can be strategically both defensive and offensive war. It is thus "senseless to divide wars into defensive and offensive wars"[1031] and to want to base judgments on their just or unjust or historical-political character on this strategic datum. The "philistine" contents himself indeed with explanations like "the enemy has invaded my country" and gives no thought to the political purpose and the class character of the war, thus to its historical-political location[1032]—"as if the essence of the matter consisted in who attacked first, and not in what

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[1028] *Über die Junius-Broschüre* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 570.

[1029] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 34, 42. Lenin has—as far as I can see—not used this terminology in his published writings. Zinoviev, however, spoke of the distinction between a war of aggression or defense in the historical sense—which is the essential thing—and a war of aggression or defense in the diplomatic and strategic sense—which is of secondary importance. "There are cases in which a defensive war in the historical sense is a war of aggression in the diplomatic or strategic sense; and vice versa" (*Der Krieg*, 176, cf. 173 f.).

[1030] *Der streitbare Militarismus und die antimilitaristische Taktik der Sozialdemokratie* (Aug 5, 1908) = *Über Krieg*, I, 352.

[1031] *Proletariat und Krieg* (Oct 25/27, 1914) = *Über Krieg*, I, 405, cf. 407.

[1032] *Über eine Karikatur auf den Marxismus* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 591.

goals he has, and which classes lead him!"[1033] Whether a war is to be designated as "reactionary" or as "revolutionary" depends exclusively on the politics which it continues, and not on who is the strategically attacker and in whose country the enemy stands.[1034] Incidentally, in the imperialist age, due to the international cohesion of bourgeoisie and proletariat, it becomes practically impossible to distinguish who and where attacked first—the world civil war makes such distinctions completely obsolete. If "the civil war within individual countries merges with the revolutionary wars between the proletarian countries and... the bourgeois countries..., the difference between defensive and offensive wars loses definitively any sense".[1035] The practical conclusion from the identification of revolutionary and just war and at the same time from the distinction between the military-strategic and the historical-political sense of offensive and defensive war is that the proletariat would not only fulfill its historical-political revolutionary-progressive function, but also *eo ipso* stand on the side of justice, if it were to undertake a strategic offensive war against its enemies. As a Marxist, Lenin thinks, one can advocate without further ado a revolutionary offensive war against "counter-revolutionary peoples".[1036]

It could appear strange that Lenin is not content with the distinction between revolutionary and reactionary or just and unjust war, but beyond that wants to attribute defensive character to the former in historical-political respects, even if it is waged strategically offensively. This coupling is logically neither necessary nor compelling, one could even object that also historically-politically seen precisely that side must seize the initiative and go over to the attack which represents the progressive and new. Lenin's logical leap has however its good political-ideological reason. Since the prevailing view—whether "philistine" or not may remain undecided—attributes the odium of the immoral and unjust to the attacker anyway or so, the designation of the enemy as attacker (and specifically in a superordinate historical-political sense) serves finally to discredit him morally before the judgment seat of history too. Justice can attack strategically, in its essence, however, it remains innocent and peace-loving; injustice may present itself outwardly as peace-loving as it wants, in its essence it remains evil and aggressive. By increasing his political polemic through a moral discrediting, which works all the more emphatically the more it is placed before the suprapersonal background of overall historical development and therefore does not have to raise moral accusations against individual persons at all, Lenin gives himself a very good example of what he means when he speaks out against the abstract application of moral categories. Here it could indeed seem as if he himself uses abstract moral categories, but decisive is not this, but the concreteness of the use of these

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[1033] *Offener Brief an B. Souvarine* (Dec 1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 656.
[1034] *Die proletarische Revolution und der Renegat Kautsky* (1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 433.
[1035] *Programmentwurf der KP Rußlands* (March 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 478.
[1036] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 415, note.

categories in their reference to a concrete enemy. This concrete use of intrinsically abstract categories and the thereby effected concretization of the abstract was of course already contained in the fundamental distinction between just and unjust wars, which in turn is ultimately only possible because the expected outcome of history provides a final yardstick for the judgment of good and evil. Lenin could of course not do the enemy the favor of acknowledging him as a morally positive or even only neutral magnitude. And precisely in his attempt to concretize moral concepts in polemics (and his superiority lay precisely in the recognition that such concepts cannot be concretized otherwise), he denounced the enemy not only as the unjust, but also as the attacker.

4. Army and Tactics

In the preliminary remark to this chapter we already explained why Lenin may be regarded rather as a politician with a keen sense for military questions than as a military expert and theorist. It is significant that he hardly expressed himself on the strategic and tactical questions raised and widely discussed during the First World War, although they just invited military-theoretical reflections. What else he offered in this regard are commonplaces, which however were presented against the background of a precise insight into their respective practical importance for the concrete moment. Thus he emphasized e.g. that in a modern war economic organization is decisive,[1037] that in a war he wins who has more reserves, sources of strength and backing in the popular masses,[1038] or that in a (revolutionary) war the whole population and the whole people's strength must be mobilized directly or indirectly.[1039] This and similar things (like for instance the highlighting of the moral and human factor or the necessity of a concentration of forces on the respectively decisive point) form neither groundbreaking discoveries nor do they suffice for the drafting of a closed strategic concept, especially since Lenin never professed a certain kind of warfare, as Marx and Engels, the admirers of Napoleon, did. Precisely this provides him, however, with a remarkable impartiality and constitutes his strength as a politician who deals with military questions in critical hours. His superiority over the (possible) narrow-mindedness of the expert and, conversely, his similarity to someone like Clausewitz lies in the recognition that every concrete situation requires a specific strategy and tactics, whereby the practical value of the principles recognized as general depends on the degree of their integration into this specific strategy and tactics. Lenin knows, in other words, that no military theory can replace the tact of judgment—and he knows this with equal clarity and consciousness as Clausewitz, although as a Marxist he stands constantly under the pressure to justify theoretically the mode of action chosen by the tact of judgment. But if he has to theorize his politics every time, he has on the other hand ensured that the theory remains elastic enough to be able to justify all possible tactical moves with more or less captivating logic.

Not by chance did Clausewitz's remarks on the priority value of the tact of judgment in the intellectual arsenal of the commander attract Lenin's attention. To Clausewitz's sentence that

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[1037] *Die drohende Katastrophe...* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 143.
[1038] *Ergebnis der Woche der Partei in Moskau* (Oct 22, 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 585.
[1039] *Rede auf einer Arbeiterkonferenz* (Dec 14, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 448; *Alle zum Kampf gegen Denikin!* (July 9, 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 546 f.

most of what happens in war must be weighed darkly according to the mere tact of judgment, he added in the margin: "and not only in war".[1040] He also underlined the passage in which it says that the art of war is neither a mere act of the intellect nor are the activities of the intellect the highest in it, as well as the remark that reality does not lie in systems, but is found only by a practiced judgment.[1041] We must however once again place emphasis on the statement that Lenin finds in Clausewitz only what is already known and familiar to him in other ways and from other sources. As in Clausewitz the epistemological precedence of the tact of judgment goes hand in hand with a historical-relativistic way of viewing, so too in Lenin, insofar as he thinks historically as a Marxist. As he writes already in 1906, "Marxism demands absolutely a historical approach to the question of forms of struggle... In different moments of economic development, depending on different political, national-cultural conditions, living conditions etc., different forms of struggle step into the foreground".[1042] Precisely this historical approach to the question of forms of struggle made, however, adherence to any ready-made general theory pointless and required instead ever new analyses and statements—ever new judgments: "Marxism rejects all abstract formulas, all doctrinaire recipes decidedly and demands an attentive entering into the actually occurring mass struggle, which... produces ever new and more varied methods of defense and attack".[1043] — And there is yet another important commonality between Lenin and Clausewitz in this regard, a commonality however which is made possible this time not by the Marxist attitude of the former, but simply by his genuine political instinct. It concerns here namely the insight that the constant change of forms and situations of struggle, which makes the well-functioning tact of judgment so indispensable, is conditioned not least by the forced alignment of one's own action with an enemy, who thus gives the law to this action. Action under constant consideration of what the enemy is capable of forces an undogmatic choice of one's own methods of struggle and even before that a preventive increase of one's own strength and combat readiness—and this both in war and in (essentially related to it) politics: "Everyone will admit that the behavior of an army is irrational, indeed criminal, which does not prepare itself to master all types of weapons, all means and methods of struggle which the enemy has or can have at his disposal. But this applies to politics even more than to the military. In politics it is even less possible to know in advance which means of struggle will be applicable and advantageous for us under these or those future circumstances. If we do not master all means of struggle, we can suffer a tremendous... defeat if changes independent of our will in the position of the other classes put a form of activity on the agenda in which we are particularly weak".[1044]

[1040] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 25.
[1041] *Op. cit.*, 29, 30.
[1042] *Der Partisanenkrieg* (Sept 30, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 294 f.
[1043] *Op. cit.*, 294.
[1044] *Der linke Radikalismus...* (1920) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 718 f.

A good example of Lenin's sovereign assessment of various forms of struggle on the basis of a well-functioning tact of judgment is his handling of attack and defense in respectively different combat situations. In Clausewitz he found not a one-sided primacy of attack or defense, as was the case with many military men and military theorists of that time, but on the contrary he was interested in the fluid transitions in which "the difference between defense and attack disappears," as well as in the "constant changing and combining of attack and defense".[1045] On Clausewitz, "one of the greatest military writers," Lenin referred indeed during the Civil War with the intention of making clear the necessity of the defensive in case of inferiority of one's own forces: "If we really have few forces, the most important means of defense is retreat into the interior of the country".[1046] Against the advocates of unconditioned offensive in his own ranks he asserted at that time that attack or defense are not panaceas in themselves, but expediency strategies depending on the given circumstances: "He who has learned to attack, but has not learned to retreat under certain difficult conditions and adapting to them, will not end the war victoriously".[1047] In every war the "method of maneuvering, tacking and retreating" in expectation of the moment when one's own forces enable the transition to attack is absolutely lawful and unavoidable.[1048]

The same Lenin now, who at least in certain phases of the Civil War advocated defense and retreat, pleaded shortly before, namely during the preparation of the Bolshevik uprising, for unconditioned offensive. For Lenin the armed uprising was "a special form of political struggle subject to special laws"[1049]—and even more than that: an "art," as he wrote with reference to Marx and Engels. The secret of victory lies in "achieving a first success and proceeding from success to success without interrupting the offensive against the enemy"; in any case a defensive tactic is doomed to failure from the outset.[1050] The seizing of the offensive in the uprising forms the central tactical command around which some important rules group: once the uprising has begun, it must be carried through consistently to the end; at the decisive place and at the decisive moment the greatest possible superiority of forces must be concentrated; the enemy must be surprised as long as his troops are still scattered; through daily, even small successes the attacker must obtain and retain moral ascendancy.[1051] In October 1917 Lenin proved in any case an astonishing flair for the fitting moment for rapid and determined offensive action.[1052] He

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[1045] *Clausewitz' Werk*, 28, 31.
[1046] *Über ‚linke' Kindereien...* (May 9, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 337.
[1047] *VII. Moskauer Gouvernementsparteikonferenz* (Oct 29, 1921) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 815.
[1048] *Brief an die amerikanischen Arbeiter* (Aug 22, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 387.
[1049] *Ratschläge eines Außenstehenden* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 233.
[1050] *Marxismus und Aufstand* (Sept 13/14 [26/27], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 179 f.; *Werden die Bolschewiki die Staatsmacht behaupten?* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 213 f.
[1051] *Ratschläge eines Außenstehenden* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 234. Cf. above III, note 296.
[1052] See above all the article: *Die Krise ist herangereift* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 204 ff., esp. 211.

thus translated into practice, on the basis of a superior use of the tact of judgment, theoretical insights which he had reached long before 1917. For already in 1905–1906 he had referred to the statements of Marx and Engels quoted again in 1917, namely that "uprising is an art and that the main rule of this art is the offensive waged with daring boldness and greatest determination";[1053] "Attack, not defense must be the slogan of the masses";[1054] "Determination and bold attack are three quarters of success".[1055]

As Lenin emphasized in 1917, the uprising must be based on the "revolutionary upsurge of the people" and take place at such a turning point in the history of the growing revolution "where the activity of the vanguard of the people is greatest, where the vacillations in the ranks of the enemies and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted, irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest" and where the "complete moral and political fiasco of the old government" has become evident.[1056] In 1905 too he had distinguished from the same point of view the undertaking of an uprising from the "senseless artificial staging of putsches",[1057] this distinction was however by no means understood by him in the sense of a disparagement of organizational factors in favor of the element of mass spontaneity; the principle: "only from below and in no case from above" was in his eyes an anarchist, not a Marxist principle.[1058] He admitted without further ado that a popular revolution could not be decreed, but the organization of an uprising seemed to him quite possible if it were "really prepared" and favored by the "occurred upheavals in social relations".[1059] This conception of the importance of organizational factors, i.e., of goal-directed, disciplined and planned action, rested in turn on a certain assessment of the (inter)action of objective and subjective historical forces, which despite all dogmatic-symbolic confession to the lawfulness of overall development kept a very wide space free for politics in the traditional sense, i.e., for the weighing of concrete situations and for action as a result of (subjective) decisions. Thus it finally becomes practically indifferent whether one conceives conscious and planned action as necessary complement to objective historical tendencies or as driving force of these tendencies—it is indispensable anyway: "It would be wrong to believe that the revolutionary classes always possess sufficient strength to accomplish an overthrow when it has fully matured on the basis of socio-economic

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[1053] *Die Lehren des Moskauer Aufstandes* (Aug 29, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 290.
[1054] *Op. cit.*, 293.
[1055] *Die Aufgaben der Abteilungen der revolutionären Armee* (Oct 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 220.
[1056] *Marxismus und Aufstand* (Sept 13/14 [26/27], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 179 f.; *Werden die Bolschewiki die Staatsmacht behaupten?* (Oct 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 216.
[1057] *Der Kampf des Proletariats und der Servilismus der Bourgeoisie* (July 3 [June 20], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 155.
[1058] *Über die Teilnahme der Sozialdemokraten an einer Provisorischen Revolutionären Regierung* (April 18 [May 1], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 132; *Über die provisorische revolutionäre Regierung* (May 3/9 [21/27], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 142, 146.
[1059] *Zwei Taktiken* (Feb 14 [1], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 86 f.

development. No, human society is not so rationally arranged and not so 'convenient' for the progressive elements. The overthrow may be mature, but the forces of the revolutionary creators of this overthrow may prove insufficient".[1060]

The peak which the organizational factor can reach in an uprising is the formation of a revolutionary army—"and the more so, the better mobilized the counter-revolutionary army is".[1061] The revolutionary army is "necessary because great historical questions can be solved only by force, but the organization of force is a military organization"; all questions of military technique and organization therefore step into the foreground under the conditions of civil war.[1062] The way in which Lenin imagines the structure of the revolutionary army remains however bound to the concrete forms of struggle in the cities and therefore what he means by "partisan war" is something quite different from what has become common in the light of experiences in the countries of the so-called Third World; to regard Lenin and Mao Tse-tung as necessary successive stages of the same development in the methods of revolutionary struggle, as often happens, is therefore just as misleading as the assumption of a similar continuity between Marx or Engels and modern guerrilla war.[1063] The revolutionary army should according to Lenin appear on the scene to replace the old barricade struggle, which had been outdated by military-technical development, with a new form of revolutionary tactics, namely operating through the "highly mobile and extraordinarily small detachment: groups of ten, groups of three, even groups of two".[1064] The goals of this operating remain accordingly limited, it is mainly either about the killing of individual persons or about the confiscation of funds; in no case is the whole dynamics and energy of the revolutionary mass struggle channeled into this partisan war, quite the contrary, it remains itself a phenomenon that thrives rather before or after the climaxes of the civil war—in Lenin's words: "an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has already reached the uprising and more or less large pauses occur between the 'great battles' of the civil war".[1065] Partisan combat actions, which of course must be carried out under the control of the party,[1066] are thus to constitute the more dynamic partial aspect of the revolutionary labor movement, which can only arise and work in connection with it. We are dealing here actually with the attempt at a synthesis between the Russian tradition of

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[1060] *Das letzte Wort der ‚iskristischen' Taktik* (Oct 17 [4], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I...
[1061] *Op. cit.*, 216.
[1062] *Revolutionäre Armee und revolutionäre Regierung* (July 10 [June 27], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 160, 161.
[1063] See above, IV, section 6.
[1064] *Die Lehren des Moskauer Aufstandes* (Aug 29, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 291. On the debate about barricades and their value for the revolutionary struggle in Lenin's immediate surroundings around 1905, see the informative essay by Fischer, *Lenin und die Technik*.
[1065] *Der Partisanenkrieg* (Sept 30, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 299.
[1066] *Op. cit.*; *Taktische Plattform zum Vereinigungsparteitag der SDARP* (March 20, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 260.

terror, which was never radically denied by Lenin,[1067] and the character of a mass movement unfolding mainly in the cities. Precisely because of this affinity of the envisioned partisan war with traditional terror, Lenin feels obliged to defend the new form of struggle against the suspicion of Blanquism: terror, he opines, was an intellectual movement which operated detached from the masses, partisan actions on the other hand represent a "necessary component" of the uprising and train the military leaders of the masses.[1068]

How foreign the later idea of partisan or guerrilla war remained to Lenin is also shown in his military-political decisions during the Civil War, i.e., above all in his turning away from the plan of a proletarian militia and in his plea for the creation of a disciplined regular army, whose superiority over partisanship he assumed not only for military, but also for social and economic reasons. Despite the partial, but important change of his military-political sympathies after 1917, however, the intensity of his interest in questions of army organization in connection with questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics never decreased. As we know, he believed that history solves all great questions by force—but "force in the epoch of the 20th century—as generally in the epoch of civilization—is neither the fist nor the club, but the army".[1069] Already in his beginnings he welcomed, as was customary among Marxists, general conscription, if it is real and does not stand merely on paper, as an "undoubtedly democratic reform" which breaks with the estate principle and introduces the equality of citizens.[1070] He represented the same standpoint even when the World War raged and the armed popular masses did not fight united against their oppressors, but killed each other. To the "imperialist" endeavor to "militarize" the whole people, including youth and women, he replied: "So much the better. Just faster forward—the faster, the nearer is the armed uprising against capitalism".[1071] Disarmament appeared therefore as a demand which could not be reconciled with the politics and dignity of the revolutionary proletariat: "an oppressed class which does not strive to gain knowledge of weapons, to be exercised in weapons, to possess weapons, such an oppressed class is only worthy to be oppressed, mistreated and treated as a slave".[1072]

From general conscription and beyond that from the militarization of the population initially standing in the service of "imperialist" purposes Lenin expected two things. First, he expected

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[1067] "In principle we have never rejected terror and cannot reject it. It is a military action that may be perfectly suitable and even essential at a certain moment of the battle, given a certain state of the troops and the existence of certain conditions", *Womit Beginnen?* (May 1901) = *Über Krieg*, I, 28.
[1068] *Die gegenwärtige Lage Rußlands und die Taktik der Arbeiterpartei* (Feb 7, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 244; *Der Partisanenkrieg* (Sept 30, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 298.
[1069] *Über die Losung der ‚Entwaffnung'* (Oct 1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 611.
[1070] *Zwangsrekrutierung von 183 Studenten* (Jan 1901) = *Über Krieg*, I, 26.
[1071] *Über das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 603.
[1072] *Op. cit.*, 602.

that the thereby effected intertwinement of army and people would open the former to revolutionary currents, which in a critical situation, in which the attitude of the army could matter, had to be decisive. During the first Russian revolution he opined that by the crossover of a part of the army to the side of the uprising the possibility was given to form from it the core of a revolutionary army and thereby to give the masses the military leadership "which is just as necessary for civil war as for any other war".[1073] According to his conviction, there could be "no talk of a serious struggle..., as long as the revolution has not become a mass movement and has not also seized the troops... In practice, the vacillation of the troops, which every real popular movement brings with it, leads with intensification of the revolutionary struggle in the truest sense of the word to the struggle for the army".[1074] At the time of the World War he therefore demanded "spread and strengthening of social democratic work in the army",[1075] and two years after the Bolshevik uprising he attributed its success not least to the sympathies or loyalties which the Bolsheviks had procured in the army, where in 1917 they possessed more than half of the total votes and even the overwhelming majority of the same on the most important fronts; in the army they thus had "a political 'shock troop' which secured them a decisive superiority at the decisive place and at the decisive moment".[1076]

Second, Lenin promised himself from the intertwinement between people and army still under capitalist rule the creation of an essential prerequisite for the abolition of the standing army and its replacement by a people's defense or people's militia. This was an early demand which was justified with the old socialist argument that standing armies are tools of reaction separated from the people, trained to shoot at the people.[1077] Lenin did not say that this people's militia could be created only after the establishment of a socialist regime, on the other hand he also did not believe that such experiments could be carried out seriously under capitalism. He seemed to assume that the people's militia would emerge as it were from the womb of the armed popular uprising in the revolutionary transition period—as a weapon of the revolution and at the same time as a germ of the new, just emerging social relations. With the organization of the militia system already existing in various countries he was in any case not satisfied, since in his view all, the Swiss not excluded, served just like the standing army the interests of the bourgeoisie; not a bourgeois, but a proletarian militia therefore had to be organized.[1078] In the months before and a short time after the Bolshevik uprising, the plan for such a militia stood at the center of his reflections on the military question. A militia "really comprising the whole people, led by the

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[1073] *Revolutionäre Armee und revolutionäre Regierung* (July 10 [June 27], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 158 f.
[1074] *Die Lehren des Moskauer Aufstandes* (Aug 29, 1906) = *Über Krieg*, I, 289.
[1075] *Die Aufgaben der linken Zimmerwalder...* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 623, cf. 640.
[1076] *Die Wahlen für die Konstituierende Versammlung und die Diktatur des Proletariats* (Dec 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 648.
[1077] *An die Dorfarmut...* (1903) = *Über Krieg*, I, 47; *Heer und Revolution* (Nov 15 [28], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 237.
[1078] *Über das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution* (1916) = *Über Krieg*, I, 602, 607.

proletariat" and "consisting 95% of workers and peasants" should take over not only the tasks of the army, but also those of the police, i.e., ensure discipline and order, distribute food and carry out general labor duty; in an even more general sense the militia would take in hand "the education of the masses for participation in all state affairs".[1079]

Under the pressure of the hard necessities of building Bolshevik rule and self-assertion in the Civil War, Lenin had to tacitly drop his former conviction, according to which the ability of the militia to stand up to military tasks in both defensive and offensive war would be proven by military science.[1080] The factual detachment from the plan of the militia—theoretically the plan was of course not abandoned, but only postponed—went hand in hand in turn with a very violent demarcation against the logically connected idea of a partisan army and a partisan war as the only military organization and warfare suitable for a revolutionary regime. Lenin regretted everything that "partisanship of cursed memory" had caused in "suffering, disintegration, defeats, catastrophes, losses of men and army property",[1081] and to the call of Left Socialist Revolutionaries and Anarchists for spontaneous people's war he gave the following rejection: "An intensified military preparation for a serious war requires no impetuosity, no appeals, no combat slogans, but a lengthy, intensive, an exceedingly persistent and disciplined work on a mass scale".[1082] Finally he detached the concept of revolutionary war from partisanship entirely and came to the view that revolutionary war too should be waged with modern means, i.e., by a centralized regular army which makes use of the modern technology of a developed economy.[1083] Only such an army, not partisanship, would incidentally be able to be an effective support to the "besieged fortress" Soviet Union[1084] in the foreign policy struggle.

[1079] *Briefe aus der Ferne*, III (March 11 [24], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 23-25; *Über die proletarische Miliz* (May 3 [April 20], 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 62 f.; *Aufgaben des Proletariats in unserer Revolution* (Sept 1917) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 57.

[1080] *Heer und Revolution* (Nov 15 [28], 1905) = *Über Krieg*, I, 237.

[1081] *Alle zum Kampf gegen Denikin!* (July 9, 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 541.

[1082] *Thesen zur gegenwärtigen politischen Lage* (May 12 or 13, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 342.

[1083] "The revolutionary war requires a lengthy, serious preparation, which begins with the economic development of the country, the operation of the railways (for without railways a modern war is an empty phrase), the restoration of strict revolutionary discipline and self-discipline everywhere", *Eine harte, aber notwendige Lehre* (Feb 25, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 306. Similarly Trotsky, *Die Geburt*, 90 f.: the opinion that the Bolsheviks would not need an army built on a "scientific basis", but only partisan troops, is equivalent to the absurd assertion that railways or steam plows would be superfluous; "for the return to partisan squads is a leap back by whole centuries".

[1084] The expression already appears in Lenin, see, e.g., the *Brief an die amerikanischen Arbeiter* (Aug 22, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 395; *Alle zum Kampf gegen Denikin!* (July 9, 1919) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 546.

After the internal, the "far more terrible" external enemy, namely "world imperialism," had also to be defeated: "for that we need above all the Red Army".[1085]

Besides the efficiency criterion and foreign policy considerations, a third viewpoint was decisive for Lenin's decision in favor of a modern regular army, which is implied in the mentioned connection between modern army and modern economy. It concerns here the view that the army is not only a main beneficiary of a developed economy, but can also provide the organizational model for such an economy. Before 1917 Lenin had pointed to the organizational model character of the army in the political sense: "Take the modern army. Here we have a good example of an organization. And this organization is good only because it is elastic enough and at the same time able to guide millions of people according to a single will... The same applies also to the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie".[1086] After 1917 he spoke repeatedly of the necessity to transfer the model of military organization to the organization of the economy. All forces which appeared in military construction were now to be used for the construction of the economy. The goal of these labor armies should be "to strain and organize all forces in a military way, to seize large food stocks and to transport them to the centers of industrial construction. For this, labor armies must be set up at any price, everything must be organized in a military way".[1087] Since "bourgeois specialists" found use in the army for the first time, it seemed to be a good example for the suitability of the army as an area for pioneering social experiments: "we must now apply this experience in industry".[1088]

[1085] *Bericht in der gemeinsamen Sitzung etc.* (Oct 22, 1918) = *Über Krieg*, II, 1, 421. On the idea of the foreign policy use of the Red Army in Geronimus, Tukhachevsky, and Frunze, see the evidence in White, *Soviet Philosophy*, 331.

[1086] *Der Zusammenbruch der II. Internationale* (1915) = *Über Krieg*, I, 478 f.

[1087] *Referat über die Arbeit des Gesamtrussischen Zentralexekutivkomitees* (Feb 2, 1920) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 664 f.

[1088] *Rede auf dem 3. Gesamtrussischen Kongreß der Schiffahrtsarbeiter* (March 15, 1920) = *Über Krieg*, II, 2, 699 f

VII. Excursus D: The Soviet Military Doctrine

The modern Soviet military doctrine understands itself as a creative application and further development of Leninist war theory. This is largely correct if we presuppose the common Soviet distinction between military doctrine and military science (see below), i.e., consider the general doctrine of war in its connection with politics separately from the fields of art of war, strategy and tactics. The Soviets opine, however, that their military science derives with logical consistency from their military doctrine, and this can in turn be admitted insofar as the military doctrine contains not only the general doctrine of the unity between war and politics, but also the concrete actualization of the same under present conditions and thus the more precise determination of the political purposes which are then to be achieved by strategy and art of war. This actualization as well as its "military-scientific" expression can, however, in reality draw little directly from Lenin and obviously spring from pragmatic decisions of the respective political and military Soviet leadership. Since, however, on the other hand, the appeal to Lenin as a military scientist in the narrower sense is commanded both for general symbolic-ideological and for tangible domestic political reasons,[1089] those decisions must somehow refer to Lenin. Insofar as it concerns decisions that concern more special military questions in the nuclear age, the reference to Lenin can of course assume only the rather vague form of repetition of his thoughts on the historical determination of forms and means of struggle as well as on the necessity of adapting the same to the respective historical and political situation:[1090] from the confession to these and similar Leninist principles only the general command of consideration of the respective situation can be derived, but something else are the individual measures in which this consideration is to concretize itself. If, however, the ritual reference to Lenin in the area of "military science" can possess little content bindingness, it must be stated on the other hand that the prevailing Soviet military doctrine starts from Lenin's theoretical principles—regardless of how these are respectively actualized to provide the general guidelines of the (military) policy to be followed.

Adherence to Leninist principles shows itself first of all in the neuralgic definition of the essence of war in its intertwinement with the definition of the essence of politics and peace. As with Lenin (and Clausewitz), so too in Soviet military theory the use of armed force is considered the specificum of war. This implies that politics in peace is characterized not by conflictlessness, but merely by abstinence from the use of armed force; the same politics makes use of the latter, however, when peace ceases and war begins. Armed struggle constitutes accordingly not the negation of politics, but its "tool under war conditions".[1091] Put differently: politics is not the counter-concept of war, not civil "moderation" in its contrast to martial "violence," but a "generic term" that covers war and peace equally, since it means essentially struggle and conflict (at least

[1089] See above, Chap. VI, 1.
[1090] See, e.g., *Lénine et les forces*, 217 f.
[1091] *Militärische Theorie*, 326.

as long as class societies exist, which however remains solely relevant in practical terms today) and since struggle and conflict occur equally in war and in peace—only in different intensity and with different means. Thus the fact can be explained that wars can arise at all: they arise namely from the womb of politics, which is why they are also through and through politics, no abolition of politics, but only politics with violent means.[1092] Precisely the consistent theoretical adherence to the use of armed force as specificum of war makes here, as already with Clausewitz,[1093] a reversal of the formula meaningless. It can namely no longer be asserted that politics represents a continuation of war to the same extent and sense as war is a continuation of politics: for the concept of politics must encompass war and peace equally, on the other hand, however, it is obvious that armed force is not applied uninterruptedly, so that one must necessarily arrive at the conclusion that there is politics which cannot be war.

In precisely this sense it is emphasized in systematic expositions of Soviet military doctrine that even the great war, however total it may appear, always represents only one of the aspects of social development, that war thus makes up only a part of the much more comprehensive whole of politics and that politics, apart from war, has a large arsenal of various non-violent means at its disposal, with whose help it is able to enforce its goals without resorting to the means of war.[1094] But if it is said that war is "merely one of the aspects of social life," it is meant that it represents "one of the various kinds of political and class struggle": struggle is thus a more comprehensive concept than war, and since war obviously does not always take place, while the warless state is called peace, struggle must also be able to take place in peace, just as in war itself other forms of struggle which cannot be classified as wars on the basis of the named definition (such as e.g. class struggle) are quite possible. Seen in this way, the confusion and identification of two social phenomena like war and class struggle or war and politics appear as "inadmissible".[1095] These theses turn significantly against the view that war has now ceased to be a means of politics, as well as against attempts like Liddell Hart's to include non-military means of struggle, from economic pressure to underground activity, in the concept of war; against this it is rightly argued that such an inclusion of means which also find application in peacetime would "inevitably lead to the absurd conclusion that war is a permanent state of human society".[1096] This means in plain text: whoever normally assumes that peace means as much as conflictlessness and that therefore economic war or underground activity come into question only in war, must conclude from this that war can be something more than application of armed force. Whoever, however, already regards peace as a state of conflict and struggle, must see the

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[1092] See, e.g., *Milovidov, Heritage*, 24; *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 19, 20.
[1093] See above, Chap. I, 3, esp. p. 34 f.
[1094] *Sokolowski, Strategie*, 249, 250.
[1095] *Op. cit.*, 251.
[1096] *Op. cit.*, 252.

specificum of war exclusively in the application of armed force. This is no paradox and no logical acrobatics, but the necessary conclusion of a coherent and plausible position.

If now the specificum of war lies in the application of armed force, the question must arise in the nuclear age how it stands with the character of war as continuation of politics, should force be exercised (primarily) by nuclear weapons. As a means of politics war was regarded so far because it was assumed that armed force could be applied in proportional relation to the set political purpose; and even if the inner dynamics of competition with the enemy led to war efforts which no longer let the named relation appear proportional, it stood firm again that the victor after the war would be by and large capable of getting the consequences of the application of armed force under control and exploiting them in his sense. The use of nuclear weapons seems, however, to destroy these two possibilities, which were given in the wars of the past, also the "total" ones. The enormous destructive power of the means seems to exclude any proportional relation to the purpose, however important it may be, and at the same time to deprive the victor of the ability to remedy the consequences of the same in his sense or to exploit them after application of force, it seems therefore to let no belligerent become the actual victor. Can now such an application of armed force constitute the specificum of a war which is considered a continuation of politics? Is only a negative answer possible here or can the answer be differentiated depending on whether one has the subjective or the objective concept of politics in mind? Can one explicitly or implicitly deny that the application of nuclear force admits no victor? Soviet military doctrine has undertaken in various variations the attempt to answer these questions in the sense of the named differentiation and the named negation, although it had to leave some things unclear. To be able to give its answers, it had to dispute fundamentally that the application of nuclear force will bring about a state in which the consequences of this application are no longer to be brought under control.

When Malenkov declared publicly in 1954 that a nuclear war would mean the destruction of human civilization, he triggered a debate which lasted several years and ended with the crystallization of Soviet military doctrine. Already from the perspective of Marxist-Leninist philosophy of history it had of course to be retorted to him first that a nuclear war could only bring about the end of capitalism.[1097] In the Khrushchev era, however, a Malenkov-like thesis temporarily attained a quasi semi-official status, and General Talensky could write e.g. that war in the military sense had outlived itself as a means of politics.[1098] Of the Leninist view on the unity of war and politics not much more remained here than the sociological finding of the dependence of the character of war as well as the means and forms of armed confrontation on

[1097] On the debate following Malenkov's declaration, see *Dinerstein, War*, 71 ff.
[1098] *Der Charakter*, 181.

socio-economic conditions and the state of development of technology.[1099] Even superiority on the socio-economic and technical level was, however, under the conditions of a nuclear war, in contrast to all earlier wars, no longer regarded as a clear guarantee for victory.[1100] The strength of the resistance against such views can already be seen from the fact that the same Talensky in another article, and apparently in order to offer the polemic against him as few points of attack as possible, besides the new view ("War today brings evidently so catastrophic destructions with it that it can and may no longer serve as a tool of politics, as has been the case for several millennia") simultaneously and logically unconnectedly professed the orthodox thesis that the outcome of a nuclear war would depend on the relationship of the decisive socio-economic factors, whereby the superiority of socialism in this respect guarantees its victory in a third world war.[1101] The embarrassment or the flexibility of other participants in the debate was expressed in some mediating position, such as e.g. that the formula of war as continuation of politics applies also in the nuclear age, but one need not put this validity to the test, or that the formula should not be interpreted dogmatically, since war is sometimes merely continuation of a senseless or insane politics.[1102] After the Cuban crisis of 1962 Malenkov's saying about the destruction of human civilization by a nuclear war was repeated a few times, but the party, especially after the fall of Khrushchev, opposed it decidedly, and at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU the Chief of the Main Political Administration of the Armed Forces General Yepishev confirmed the validity of the formula also for nuclear war; in fundamental articles the opinion was rejected about the same time that nuclear weapons were only suicide instruments and no means of politics, while the fear that in a nuclear war there would be no victor was condemned as theoretically false and politically dangerous or as demoralizing and fatalistic.[1103]

Adherence to the unity of war and politics had, however, to be somehow reconciled with the necessities of the policy of "peaceful coexistence." Such a coexistence would be impossible both in the case where the socialist camp wanted to unleash nuclear war in the consciousness of its superiority and in the certainty of its victory, and in the case where the innate aggressive tendencies of the imperialist camp would override any rational insight into the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war. Here it was of course theoretically easier to assert that socialism will prevail due to its historical superiority even without nuclear war and therefore it need not accept the undeniably great destructions of a nuclear confrontation, than to express the expectation that the insight or even the good will of the imperialists would gain the upper hand

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[1099] *Op. cit.*, 174.
[1100] *Op. cit.*, 178.
[1101] *Die Theorie*, 189, 187 f.
[1102] References in *Wolfe, Soviet Strategy*, 72 ff.
[1103] References in *Dahm, Neuere Entwicklungstendenzen*, 119 f., 132 f.; *Dahm, Sowjetische Militärdoktrin*, 394 f.; *Kolkowitz, Soviet Military*, 304 f.; *Warner, Military*, 88 f.

over the objective tendencies of the "system." Significant for this is the fluctuation of Soviet positions regarding the "reasonableness" of Western leadership, which incidentally tends to be disparaged precisely when the unity of war and politics is emphasized.[1104] Without the assumption of a minimum of such reasonableness it does not work, however, subjective politics must therefore be granted scopes which are significant enough to enable the prevention of nuclear war despite the objective nature of imperialism, while at the same time the causal connection of nuclear war and imperialism in the sense of objective politics applies undiminished. A typical passage reads: "The statement that nuclear rocket war has ceased to be a tool of politics is true only insofar as it has become impossible to solve the problems and contradictions in the world with the help of wars... In our time there is not a single contentious problem that could justify the use of nuclear weapons. But that does not mean that war had changed its socio-economic and political nature... [Nuclear war would be] continuation, expression, tool and result of the criminal politics of imperialism to achieve its goals".[1105]

If thus the Soviet analyses fluctuate between the two assertions that nuclear war is in its etiology continuation of a politics and that it must not be used as a political means,[1106] they place one time the objective, the other time the subjective concept of politics in the foreground, without worrying about the theoretical problems raised thereby, let alone solving them. The accusation against "bourgeois" theorists that they would confuse the theoretical question of the socio-political essence of nuclear war with the practical question of the suitability of nuclear war for the achievement of political purposes,[1107] reflects in this respect the ambiguity of the Soviet overall position itself, which sometimes also finds expression in an ambiguous attitude towards

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[1104] Thus, e.g., after 1964, see *Kolkowitz, op. cit.*

[1105] *Samkowoj, Krieg und Koexistenz*, 52 f. In this text, first published in 1965, it is stated that the assertion that war is no longer a means of policy "frequently also appears in the literature of the socialist countries" (*op. cit.*, 52). Even after the crystallization of the prevailing Soviet military doctrine, similar views admittedly continue to be represented; the direct questioning of the validity of the formula for the atomic age nevertheless generally fails to materialize. Let us take as an example an East German essay from the year 1978, whose particular interest for us lies in the reference to Clausewitz. The author first concedes that war, even in its absolute form, remains a continuation of policy; but then, in agreement with many Western Clausewitz commentators, he modifies this fundamental position to the effect that absolute war has "the tendency within itself to slip away from policy, of which it is the continuation, as a manageable instrument": precisely this tendency is allegedly acknowledged by bourgeois circles who came to "realistic insights" in the face of the danger of atomic annihilation. Finally, it is assured that a nuclear war on the side of the socialist states would also be a just war, but it is not unequivocally stated that these states would be victorious in such a war (*Türpe, Krieg und Frieden*, esp. 318, 319).

[1106] Cf. *Arnett, Soviet Attitudes*, esp. 57 f., 64.

[1107] *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 48.

Clausewitz himself as originator of the formula.[1108] Presupposing the objective concept of politics, the doctrine of war as continuation of politics in the nuclear age means that a nuclear war, like every other in the past too, must have its social causes and its social content or class character; nuclear weapons cannot burst the boundaries of politics, only politics actualizes in war the possibilities made available by technology.[1109] If it is now recognized in this general meaning of the determination of war by "political intercourse" that nuclear war is continuation of the politics of a state or a class,[1110] it is admitted on the other hand that nuclear weapons have considerably changed the sense of the continuation of politics by war,[1111] although these changes are examined preferably with regard to "imperialism" rather than with regard to "socialism"; for the former a "drastic conflict" between political purposes and technical means is said to have arisen, since the effects of these latter could no longer be brought under safe control.[1112] Corresponding to the primacy of objective politics, however, the expected extreme intensity of a nuclear war is not traced back exclusively to the destructive power of nuclear weapons; the intensity and extent of a nuclear war would correspond to the intensity and extent of the antagonism between the belligerent camps: "Since in this war the fate of a social order on a world scale would be decided—and that would be a novelty in world history—both sides would set themselves the most decisive political and military goals".[1113]

The clarification or at least the dogmatic regulation of the question whether war in the nuclear age remains continuation of politics went hand in hand with the gradual crystallization of Soviet military doctrine. A certain paradox lies in the fact that the Clausewitz-Lenin formula had to be defended against innovative tendencies, while the practical main problem of the Soviet armed forces at the time of the theoretical debate summarized above was precisely the modernization of all branches of service to be able to keep pace with developments in the field of nuclear weapons. The same military authors who insisted on the full validity of the formula for the nuclear age opined simultaneously that wars in the past could no longer be regarded as the main sources for the development of military science and that conservative views harmed

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[1108] Thus, on the one hand, Clausewitz is accused of inspiring those "imperialist" strategists who view war as a continuation of policy and, based on this view, prepare for an "imperialist" nuclear war — but in the same breath, on the other hand, he is defended against those in the bourgeois camp who, precisely in their desire to exclude nuclear war as a means of policy, do not want to recognize the theory of war as a continuation of policy and thus theoretically question Marxism-Leninism! (*op. cit.*, 46, 47). In the former case, therefore, the opponent is accused of a practical lack of a peace-loving subjective policy, in the latter of the theoretical denial of the primacy of objective policy.

[1109] *Milovidov, Heritage*, 46, 47.

[1110] *Sokolowski, Strategie*, 53; *Skirdo, The People*, 5 f.; *Militärische Theorie*, 83.

[1111] *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 506.

[1112] *Militärische Theorie*, 86.

[1113] *Modernes Militärwesen*, 395; cf. *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 50 f., as well as *Skirdo, The People*, 9.

most in this regard;[1114] they also complained about Stalin's underestimation of nuclear weapons, which had placed considerable obstacles in the way of the reorganization of the armed forces, and confessed that the overcoming of "traditional views" had required "long and hard" work.[1115] The term "revolution in military affairs" was introduced into Soviet terminology only in 1962,[1116] and even in 1968 the "new theory of the art of war" was felt as a recent achievement which sprang from a "change" in Soviet strategic thinking.[1117] As the simultaneous defense of the formula and of nuclear modernization already implies, that "new theory of the art of war" was characterized by a compromise: nuclear weapons were upgraded and even received absolute priority, at the same time however the military doctrine did not orient itself exclusively on them, but retained essential aspects of "traditional views," whereby the continued strong position of conventional armed forces was theoretically covered. From this compromise arose no weakness, but on the contrary significant advantages for the Soviet Union, of which brief mention will be made at the end of this excursus.

Through the turning of Soviet strategic thinking to modern nuclear weapons and their consequences for the art of war, the problems of the initial period of war had to gain substantially in weight for obvious reasons.[1118] The compromise solution found here to reserve a role for conventional armed forces in the course of war amounted to a recognition of the possibly decisive character of the initial period, without however excluding that the decision could fall only in later phases of war.[1119] Accordingly, the possibility of a short total duration of nuclear war was admitted, again however without excluding a longer duration which would require the use of conventional armed forces,[1120] as we shall see in detail. Finally, within the framework of the new considerations on the initial phase of a nuclear war, the chances of success of a surprise attack had to be strategically assessed. To the extent that "traditional views" were overcome, the element of surprise was understandably upgraded,[1121] at the same time however the effort became noticeable to keep this upgrading within limits by estimating the possibilities of timely detection of the surprise attack through increased vigilance highly.[1122] Interestingly, it has been assumed here that in a surprise attack not only the start of the attack, but also the "start of direct preparation" for it could be detected in time, so that the enemy plans

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[1114] *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 531.
[1115] *Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, Die strukturelle Entwicklung*, 224 f., 231.
[1116] On the more detailed circumstances of this introduction and the discussion at that time, especially in the military press, see *Galay, Soviet Approach*, esp. 29 f.
[1117] *Modernes Militärwesen*, 392, 423.
[1118] *Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, Die strukturelle Entwicklung*, 233.
[1119] See, e.g., *Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, Kriegskunst*, 927, 928, 925.
[1120] *Op. cit.*, 928, 924; *Sokolowski, op. cit.*
[1121] Cf. *Dinerstein, War*, 180 ff.
[1122] See, e.g., *Lomov, Die Anpassung*, 114.

could be thwarted by a annihilation blow—which the Soviets want to call preemptive and not preventive.[1123] It is obvious that here a quite broad space is preserved for one's own discretion when it comes to the decision who should strike the first blow; according to the logic of the "preemptive" blow, one side can in any case strike the first blow and present itself as the defender. The facts are unclear anyway. If the side that wants to strike the "preemptive" blow actually begins its (counter)action only when the preparations of the enemy for a surprise attack are already underway, it must be assumed that it possesses considerably faster weapons—if the blow is really to be "preemptive." However, it is not clear how, given such a clear superiority of one side, the other will want to start a war of annihilation.[1124]

The noticeable concern to keep the upgrading of the initial period and the element of surprise within limits and thus not to grant the nuclear weapon exclusivity in the field of armament and warfare must of course be interpreted as (partial) adherence to Stalin's theory of the permanently operating factors in war, yet it would be wrong to see in this adherence merely stubborn Stalinist disposition and to overlook the sound theoretical and practical reasons that led to it. After the failure of the German Blitzkrieg in Russia, Stalin notoriously developed the view that the permanently operating factors (i.e., the socio-economic and moral-ideological potential of a country or the stage of historical development on which it finds itself) and not temporary or accidental moments (such as surprise) must decide the outcome of a war; from this the confident conclusion was to be drawn that socialism as a superior social system could win every war.[1125] From 1945 on, the theory of permanently operating factors also served to downplay the importance of the American nuclear weapons monopoly or potential.[1126] Some time after Stalin's death and in connection with the emerging new evaluation of nuclear weapons, doubts arose against the absolute precedence of the permanently operating factors, and thereby the possibility of a decisive defeat within a short time was spoken of. Thus temporarily operating or even accidental factors (like surprise, the abilities of military leadership or individual developments in the field of technology) seemed to be able to override historical laws, and corresponding arguments were advanced against the new position, although its representatives generally showed themselves cautious, namely first turning against an all-too-narrow understanding of the theory of permanently operating factors or asserting

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[1123] *Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, Militärstrategie*, 260; *Sokolowski, Strategie*, 296; *Sadykiewitz, Militärdoktrin*, 70 ff.

[1124] Wolfe points out a further lack of clarity in the Soviet position on this question, namely the contradiction between the emphasis on the advantages of a preemptive strike and the assurance that the Soviet Union will only deal retaliatory strikes to the possible enemy. "The resulting uncertainty as to where the Soviets really stand on this question may be precisely the impression they wish to create" (*Soviet Strategy*, 66).

[1125] *Dinerstein, War*, 27 ff.

[1126] References in *Kissinger, Nuklearwaffen*, 308 ff.

they argued only military-scientifically and did not want to touch the fundamental doctrines of the unity of politics and war etc.; this did not save them, however, from the accusation that they would do just that, i.e., abandon the Marxist-Leninist view of historical lawfulness and of war as continuation of (objective) politics in favor of a purely technical-military consideration.[1127] Although the theory of permanently operating factors was designated as obsolete in the course of de-Stalinization, it has been able—not least because of its deeper agreement with the general Marxist-Leninist understanding of history—to assert its position well and finally attained a substantial place within the elaborated military doctrine by being reformulated in such a way that it could take into account the new, nuclear possibilities of warfare well or badly.[1128]

In the presentations of Soviet military doctrine, the theory of permanently operating factors is often introduced by the warning that one must not elevate nuclear weapons to a fetish, as "bourgeois" military ideologues did; the main question is rather in whose hands these weapons are.[1129] It is not consistently denied that "with an unrestricted use of rocket weapons the results of the armed struggle in the initial period can predetermine not only the course, but also the outcome of the war",[1130] and likewise the "revolution" in military affairs and military theory is fundamentally affirmed,[1131] but from this it is not concluded that the theory of permanently operating factors and *per implicationem* also the conventional armed forces have become obsolete—on the contrary: "Soviet military doctrine," it is declared, "is guided by the Marxist-Leninist thesis of the determining influence of socio-economic and military-political conditions on the entire military system of a state".[1132] The social and political system of a country thus acts decisively on the state of its potential in economic, political and moral respects and thus forms the "determining" factor in the course and outcome of a war.[1133] The general laws prevailing in war reflect for their part the social relations as they become effective in war itself as a social phenomenon. And these general laws, which determine the course and outcome of wars in general, will remain in force also during a nuclear war, although the manner of their actualization under these new circumstances will show quite specific features.[1134]

The (tacit) rehabilitation of the theory of permanently operating factors within Soviet military doctrine was insofar a logically consistent step (we want to disregard the socio-political

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[1127] Details on the debate in *Dinerstein, War*, esp. 37 ff.; 58 ff.
[1128] *Garthoff, Soviet Strategy*, 82 ff.; *Dahm, Sowjetische Militärdoktrin*, 385; on the statements regarding the theory of the permanently operating factors in connection with the debates on the possible duration of a nuclear war, see *Wolfe, Soviet Strategy*, 130 ff.
[1129] See, e.g., *Zav'jalov, Zum gegenwärtigen Stand*, 320.
[1130] *Lomov, Sowjetische Militärdoktrin*, 368.
[1131] *Op. cit.*, 374.
[1132] *Op. cit.*, 371.
[1133] *Lomov, Die Anpassung*, 108.
[1134] *Skirdo, The People*, 77 f.

motivation here), as this theory is in agreement with the Leninist view on war as continuation of politics. We know that in the named view politics is understood in the objective sense—and the permanently operating factors are nothing other than a paraphrase of this objective concept of politics. Seen in this way, the assumed validity of the Clausewitz-Lenin formula also in the nuclear age means that nuclear war as continuation of a politics which encompasses the social *in toto* is not limited to the exchange of nuclear blows, which determines its outcome apart from all other factors, but represents a much more extensive multidimensional process; this is at least the conclusion which Soviet military doctrine draws from the two named premises, i.e., from the Clausewitz-Lenin formula and from the theory of permanently operating factors. The intertwinement of war and politics shows itself, in other words, in the participation of all permanently operating factors in the war, to the war potential belong therefore under the conditions of modern war the economic, scientific-technical, political-moral and military potential.[1135] The precedence of objective politics or permanently operating factors says moreover that the victory of the socially and politically superior is certain and that accordingly strategy should seek victory, i.e., be offensively oriented. Let us turn to the individual aspects of this ensemble of thoughts.

The concept of "nuclear omnipotence" or "nuclear fatalism" is according to the view of authoritative Soviet strategists "metaphysical" and "one-sided" because in it war is detached from politics and becomes a technical matter. The elimination of politics by this concept shows itself not least in the elimination of the role of the popular masses (i.e., the collective carrier of politics in the objective sense), which are presented as passive objects of the action of nuclear weapons.[1136] The impression would be wrong that this is one of those abstract solemn appeals to the people and the masses which are not uncommon in Marxist-Leninist rhetoric. On the contrary, the concept of popular masses is used concretely, i.e., it means the sum of the originators of all the individual activities which produce the war potential of a country: the popular mass creates in this sense the economic strength of the country, it provides the armed forces, it supports the war effort through its willingness to sacrifice and its morale etc. etc.[1137] This involvement of the popular mass in the war, which under the circumstances of a nuclear war would take place much more rapidly and comprehensively than in all earlier wars,[1138] forms in itself the surest sign that nuclear war cannot be only a matter of nuclear weapons. Economically it might be true here perhaps that the preceding achievements (specifically those connected with the construction of nuclear weapons) will have decisive importance (unlike in the two World Wars, in which economic achievements during the acts of war tipped the scales),

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[1135] *Modernes Militärwesen*, 43.
[1136] *Milovidov, Heritage*, 128.
[1137] On this see *Skirdo, The People*, 33 ff.
[1138] *Modernes Militärwesen*, 49.

nevertheless it is by no means excluded that a longer duration of the war will make new and special achievements also in the field of economy necessary.[1139] To the intensity of this effort of the whole people corresponds the totality of the objective in a nuclear war: "Under these conditions the political goals of the fighting parties in the future world war will be achieved not only by destruction of the armed forces, but also by a complete disorganization of the economy of the enemy and by influence on the morale of his population. Therefore now the essence of war as continuation of politics by application of armed force and the specific peculiarities of war appear even more clearly than in the past".[1140]

Of prime importance in nuclear war appears the morale, combat readiness and ideological motivation of the people. As Soviet military authors emphasize, nuclear war cannot be an impersonal conflict of rockets; man will prove in it to be just as fundamental a factor as in all past wars too, for the military-technological revolution does not annul, but on the contrary enriches in content one of the most important laws of warfare, namely the dependence of war preparation, war course and war outcome on the moral-political state of the civilian population and the army.[1141] Course and outcome of war are said to be conditioned altogether by four "military-scientific laws": a) by the law of correlation of the military means available to each side at the beginning of the war; b) by the law of correlation of the total military potential of the belligerents; c) by the law of the effect of the political content of the war; d) by the law of correlation of the moral-political and psychological properties of the belligerent peoples and armies.[1142] The last two laws are most important, mainly on them rest indeed the "principles of the art of war".[1143] At the same time there is closest connection between them, since the morale of people and army hangs together with their insight into the political content and character of the war.[1144] Precisely as continuation of a politics war is able to motivate and mobilize psychologically; and precisely as politics war is waged by the people, whereby man remains the decisive force in armed struggle.[1145] If in the West the view is widespread that man has become a mere appendage of the machine, the reason for this lies merely in the inability of imperialism to offer the people high moral motivation.[1146] In reality the role of this motivation and of the human factor in general could only become even weightier in the nuclear age. For nuclear war will obviously be the hardest of all possible tests for a people, and the mastery of the tasks which the immense destructions and losses will pose could only succeed for a people that is

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[1139] *Skirdo, The People*, 47; *Marxisme-Léninisme et la guerre*, 382 f.
[1140] *Sokolowski, Strategie*, 251; cf. *Modernes Militärwesen*, 20 f.
[1141] *Milovidov, Heritage*, 193 f.
[1142] *Savkin, Basic Principles*, 89 ff.
[1143] *Op. cit.*, 97.
[1144] *Op. cit.*, 94.
[1145] *Op. cit.*, 95.
[1146] *Grechko, Armed Forces*, 165.

politically strongly enough motivated and possesses the necessary morale.[1147] But already in the preparation and conduct of a highly technicized war, as nuclear war will be, the absolute precedence of the human factor shows itself. The complicated devices, weapons and weapon systems can be handled only by "human top material," and accordingly the importance of intellectual factors grows parallel with the progress of military technology.[1148] Under these circumstances the attempts of Western strategists to formalize the course of a nuclear war with the help of game theory and mathematical means in general and to determine it in advance must be declared a "senseless operation"; not much can be foreseen and formalized if "the sphere of action of machines is always narrower, poorer than the sphere of activity of man".[1149]

The necessity of massive conventional armed forces is now theoretically derived from this view of the precedence of the human-moral factor and from the associated rejection of "unscientific bourgeois theories" about "push-button warfare" and small professional armies.[1150] Soviet strategists do not share the prognosis that in a nuclear war there will be neither strategy nor tactics. War will be waged despite the "decisive role" of nuclear weapons with massive armed forces and victory in it will be won only through the "united efforts of all branches of service."[1151] To this result, to which also "the most far-sighted bourgeois military men arrived," Soviet military doctrine came on the basis of "objective research into the peculiarity of modern war," by refuting the theory of the "apparent independence and absolute validity of a certain weapon type".[1152] As far as land forces in particular are concerned, the necessity and importance of their participation in the overall enterprise for achieving victory explains itself by the fact that this victory consists not only in the complete destruction of the armed forces of the enemy, but also in the occupation of his territory, which obviously can be carried out only by land forces.[1153] In nuclear war there will be of course no continuous fronts, and only meeting engagements will take place; the combat actions of land forces will be characterized by great spatial extension, rapid deployment in different directions and simultaneous application of different forms of

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[1147] *Op. cit.*, 163 f.; *Milovidov, Heritage*, 206; *Lomov, Scientific-technical Progress*, 195.
[1148] *Lomov, op. cit.*, 188; *Skirdo, The People*, 53; *Milovidov, Heritage*, 149, cf. 217, 236.
[1149] *Militärische Theorie*, 493, 497. Translated into Clausewitz's language, this means that friction is just as possible in nuclear war as in all other wars. See above Excursus B, last paragraphs.
[1150] See, e.g., *Milovidov, Heritage*, 263 f.; *Sokolowski, Strategie*, 292. On the Soviet debate of the early 1960s regarding the relative importance of nuclear weapons and conventional forces, which ended with a viable compromise and left many questions open, see *Kolkowitz, Soviet Military*, 157 ff., 260; *Wolfe, Soviet Strategy*, 30 ff., 51 ff.; cf. the remarks by *Dahm, Sowjetische Militärdoktrin*, esp. 85 f.
[1151] Savkin, *Basic Principles*, 126 f.; *Tschujkow, Landstreitkräfte*, 274; cf. *Lomov, Scientific-Technical Progress*, 73, 137 (use of conventional weapons in nuclear war); *Lomov, Die Anpassung*, 115.
[1152] *Bondarenko, Überlegenheit*, 318.
[1153] *Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, Die strukturelle Entwicklung*, 242; *Modernes Militärwesen*, 443.

maneuver or by large-scale, flexibly conducted attacks with very mobile mechanized troops.[1154] Thereby it is assumed without further ado that units and large units of Soviet land forces can be "active for a longer time successfully in highly contaminated and radiation areas".[1155]

From the unity of politics in the objective sense and war or from the assumed precedence of permanently operating factors two further central aspects of Soviet military doctrine are derived, namely the offensive character of warfare and the certainty of victory. A war which is continuation of communist politics must be waged offensively because of the objective character of this politics. As it literally says: "The offensive character of Soviet strategy is explained largely by the nature itself of the revolutionary proletariat and its army, by the active nature of communist ideology". Beyond that, however, there are also purely military reasons for this same precedence of the offensive: "Marxists have always emphasized that the primacy of the offensive over the defensive lies in the objective needs of warfare. The offensive forms the basic type of military operations, and its goal is the total destruction of the enemy".[1156] It is expected indeed that because of the mentioned lack of continuous fronts in a nuclear war strategic attack and strategic defense will lose their earlier meaning or the boundaries between attack and defense will no longer be as sharply defined as before, on the other hand however assumed that the preponderance of attack over defense, which was already present in past wars, will further increase.[1157] Besides the remaining basic principles of tactical-operative art (mobility and high operative tempo, surprise, concentration of main efforts and main forces at the decisive place at the decisive moment), active warfare, i.e., the offensive, has a special status. Its essential advantage over other forms of warfare lies in the fact that it allows seizing the initiative and thus breaking the enemy's will and a decisive victory; defense too must be conducted actively-offensively if it is to have long-term success.[1158] In offensive warfare finally the whole superiority of the permanently operating factors is condensed, which are supposed to guarantee the "lawful victory of the progressive communist social and economic system over the

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[1154] *Tschujkow, Landstreitkräfte*, 276; *Sokolowski, Strategie*, 286; *Lomov, Scientific-Technical Progress*, 147; *Savkin, Basic Principles*, 103..

[1155] *Tschujkow, Landstreitkräfte*, 276; *Lomov, Scientific-Technical Progress*, 148.

[1156] *Milovidov, Heritage*, 106 f.; cf. *Lomov, Scientific-Technical Progress*, 135; *Lénine et les forces*, 229 ("not to overthrow the adversary, but to annihilate him"). On the precedence of the offensive in Soviet military thought before and after the Second World War, see generally *Garthoff, Doctrine*, 65 ff.; on the principle of the annihilation of the enemy 149 ff.

[1157] Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 50, 423.

[1158] Savkin, *Basic Principles*, 167 ff., 248 ff. Interestingly, in connection with the primacy of the offensive and the moral factor, the insights of "Prussian militarists" like Bernhardi and Ludendorff are particularly praised here (*op. cit.*, 27 f., 247, 48). Let us recall in passing that the absolute precedence of the human factor over the machine was also a topos in National Socialist literature, see, e.g., *Hierl, Grundlagen*, 17.

reactionary capitalist system".[1159] Historical lawfulness reveals itself thus as the purest form of that objective politics whose continuation nuclear war and the victory of socialism shall be. In this view the synthesis of Marxist-Leninist philosophy of history and Clausewitz-Leninist theory of war is achieved within Soviet military doctrine.

The crystallization of Soviet military doctrine fell in a time in which the Soviet Union was just beginning to undertake greater armament efforts and to raise justified claim to precedence in the military field. Many Western commentators opined that this development could only go back to an increased influence of the military, whereby they tacitly assumed the liberal view according to which the civilian leadership represents by definition the moderate, the military however the warmongering element. Translating this view into a quasi-sociological language, they contrasted elitism, professionalism, nationalism, social isolationism and the inclination to heroic symbolism, which are supposed to characterize the military, with egalitarianism, precedence of ideology, proletarian internationalism, social engagement and inclination to anonymity, as they allegedly thrive in the ranks of the party.[1160] On the basis of this dichotomy it was then asserted that the Soviet military had become a state within the state, that it factually and gradually usurped the hegemonic position of the party, in order then eventually in a crisis openly to take the place of the party, that it pushed forward the militarization of society etc.[1161]. Such an understanding of the relationships between party and military and thus of the sociological backgrounds of the crystallization of Soviet military doctrine rests however on a false conception of the character of the ruling Soviet elite, which has constituted itself in such a way that in it the contrast between civil and military, as it is conceived according to liberal standards, is simply objectless and meaningless. The distinguishing features just mentioned can incidentally be easily relativized: the party is no less elitist or nationalist than the military (this is certainly the conviction of anonymous party members and non-party members in the Soviet Union and no less in the remaining countries of the Eastern Bloc) and it lets itself be guided at least as much by pragmatic considerations when it makes its decisions (Western leaders have certainly often felt this). That the military in turn stands as it were apart from society cannot be the case already in view of the phenomena to which the representatives of this view themselves point when they speak of the militarization of Soviet society: meant here is the growing intertwinement of the military with modern technology and the corresponding strata of the intelligentsia as well as its active presence within youth and the education system.[1162] Under such viewpoints a contrast between military and party cannot be constructed—and others again

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[1159] Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 294. Similarly *Skirdo, The People*, 74; *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 52, 54, 46; *Modernes Militärwesen*, 394 f.; *Samkowoj, Krieg und Koexistenz*, 54.
[1160] Kolkowitz, *Soviet Military*, 21.
[1161] Kolkowitz, *Military Intervention*, esp. 111 ff., 118 ff.
[1162] Cf. the good remarks directed against Kolkowitz by *Odom, Soviet Military*, esp. 14–16.

do not exist. As the Soviet system functions, the military forms less an independent power and more a special bureaucracy next to others, simply because the ruling party has taken over much more military-political functions under its own direction than civilian leadership in liberal countries was ever able to do. From this results the possibility of a politicization of the military to the extent that the civil militarizes itself—whereby however a completely new entity arises which leaves the separations common in the West between these areas behind, so that here words like "politicization" and "militarization" may be used only in a conventional sense.

This intertwinement of civil or party and military makes itself felt in a double respect. On the one hand there is commonality in all central points of foreign and domestic policy, from the general wish for strengthening the world position of the Soviet Union to the handling of the nationality question or "order" in the interior—the great power-political viewpoints are, in other words, identical. On the other hand it has never been so that the military unitedly represented a certain view which would have stood opposite to another view unitedly represented by the party in the same question. The differences of opinion went always across party and military, so that already for this reason hypostatizations like "the" party or "the" military must be considered extremely questionable. Different groups of military men supported in different situations different positions which had been formulated in the organs of the party itself, and there was never a position in an important question which had proceeded exclusively from the military side and been carried by the entire military in opposition to the party. The striving for special professional privileges constitutes again no specificum of the military, which obviously acts most unitedly in such cases, but it characterizes all groups of the ruling elite, which must constantly fight for the distribution of power among themselves as well as for their common assertion. This is in any case the political way of life of the Soviet ruling elite after Stalin's death, and the sense of so-called "de-Stalinization" as well as of the "collective" leadership principle consisted not least in establishing an equilibrium between the named groups and not letting their dispute with each other be decided by the unpredictable and painful whip of a Caesar. Seen in this way, the assumption is at least one-sided that after Stalin's death "the" military, which until then had been treated with severity and completely subjected to the party, developed independence and expanded its relative power position in connection with the necessities created by the technical revolution.[1163] Similar independence has been displayed also by the other groups of the ruling elite since 1953 to varying degrees, and this was also to be expected, since the lack of a dictator in the earlier sense made a new *modus vivendi* inevitable, in which a certain freedom of movement and a certain equilibrium conditioned each other. Freedom of movement (always in the circles of the ruling elite) became possible in a time which stood under the sign of struggles for succession and for the political line now to be followed, so

[1163] Thus, e.g., *Erickson, The "Military Factor"*, 217, 222, 223; *Kolkowitz, Soviet Military*, 115 f.

that cracks and thus free spaces arose which were not present earlier. These struggles in the womb of the ruling elite let the relative weight of the military rise actually in the years 1953–1957, even in this phase however it did not act unitedly and for own purposes which would have been opposed to those of "the" party, but always only as ally of a powerful party wing, to whose ideas and future perspectives the military (i.e. again: the fraction prevailing in it respectively) felt drawn.[1164] That the military even in this fluid transition period attained no own power as a closed group is shown by the ease with which Marshal Zhukov was removed in 1957, although the new leadership was not yet firmly in the saddle; significantly, a significant part of the armed forces turned against Zhukov at that time too.[1165] Khrushchev's fall was finally not an act of revenge of "the" military because of the partly planned partly already initiated restriction of conventional armed forces and also not result of a general crisis in the relations between military and party,[1166] but it was prepared and carried out within the party—again with the help of an important fraction of the military, which had to delimit itself partly against another, partly turn against it: for in all larger topics which were raised and debated in the Khrushchev era—from the primacy of heavy industry to the distribution of roles between nuclear weapons and conventional armed forces and to individual strategic questions (e.g. relationship of attack and defense)—opinions diverged also within the military.[1167]

The stabilization of the post-Stalin *modus vivendi* of the ruling elite under Brezhnev resulted also in a by and large well-functioning routine in the relations between party and military. The intensified military presence of the Soviet Union in the world as well as the forced armament and growing use of advanced technology for military purposes had to increase the special weight of the uniformed members of the ruling elite, the power-political objectives and organizational structures of the party were however designed in such a way that the greater participation of the military in planning and deciding could be absorbed without special difficulties and channeled according to the wish of the supreme political leadership. A solo run of the military against the party was never in question; at most the authoritative military men could help a group in the Politburo to prevail,[1168] in general however the military leadership did

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[1164] Cf. Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy*, 18 ff.; Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy*, 98 ff.

[1165] These facts are also established by Kolkowitz, see *Soviet Military*, 134, 253, 143.

[1166] As Kolkowitz opines, *op. cit*., 282 ff., cf. 156 ff.

[1167] See Erickson, *The "Military Factor"*, 220, 225. Wolfe, who rightly remarks that "the debate probably has been dominated more by the nature of the issues than by purely institutional differences between the political and military leaderships", distinguishes between representatives of "traditionalist", "modernist", and "centrist" views within the military (*Soviet Strategy*, 30, 6). Warner does not accept this distinction, since in his opinion the military in the last years of the Khrushchev era tended for the most part toward mixed views, which anticipated the theoretical and practical compromise summarized in Sokolowski's *Strategie* (*Military*, 141 ff., 157). This, however, does not necessarily imply a unified position of "the" military; rather, it suggests that the "centrist" views predominated quantitatively.

[1168] See the good remarks by Wagenlehner, *Die Rolle*, 90.

not want to determine the guidelines of state policy, but rather serve a party and a government which for their part strove to the best of their ability for the strengthening of the world power Soviet Union.[1169] The control of the party over the army or more precisely the partial intertwinement of party and army was organizationally guaranteed by the unity of political and military leadership on the basis of the leading role of the party, by the party membership of officers and the party organizations in the army as well as by other institutional measures.[1170] This factual state is recorded in the incessantly recurring affirmation of the "constant and direct leadership" of the Soviet armed forces by the CPSU.[1171]

On the more special level of military theory, which interests us primarily here, the hierarchy of instances and at the same time the hierarchy of political-military priorities is reflected in the distinction between military doctrine and military science. According to this, military doctrine comprises the views "prevailing" or "officially approved" in a state on the fundamental questions of war in their relation to the whole complex of foreign and domestic policy and taking into account all material and spiritual possibilities of the respective state.[1172] Military science for its part researches the laws of struggle in war; since however struggle in war encompasses not only armed confrontation, but also other forms (political and diplomatic, ideological, economic, psychological etc.), which exist also within war, but gain their peculiarity and special features in the period of its conduct, the actual art of war, thus the art of armed struggle, forms only a—admittedly central—part of military science and is subdivided for its part into strategy, operational art and tactics.[1173] — Now military doctrine is determined by the political leadership of the state[1174]—"with participation of higher military organs,"[1175] as it says sometimes, but not always, in Soviet publications. Strategy, in which the principles of military doctrine concretize themselves on the level of military science, is supposed for its part to emerge from the cooperation of the supreme political and military leadership.[1176] The necessity of this cooperation is based on the objective intertwinement and interaction of politics and strategy.

[1169] Cf. Mackintosh, *Soviet Military*, 12.
[1170] On this Grechko, *Armed Forces*, 290 ff.; *Lénine et les forces*, esp. 163, 179, 195; *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 307 ff. Cf. *Kolkowitz, Soviet Military*, 80 ff., and Brzezinski, *Party Controls*, esp. 583, 588, 590.
[1171] Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, *Strukturelle Entwicklung*, 215; *Milovidov, Heritage*, 84 f.; Lomov, *Sowjetische Militärdoktrin*, 368, 372; Skirdo, *The People*, 28. Cf. the references in *Dahm, Neuere Entwicklungstendenzen*, 130 f. Sometimes the subjugation of the army to the party is justified by reference to Clausewitz's formula, which, to be sure, corresponds to the liberal-civilian and no longer the Leninist interpretation of the same. Trotsky had already referred to Clausewitz's formula to underpin the view that the army was to be merely the tool of the respective state policy (*Die Geburt*, 87, 171, 182).
[1172] Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 84; Koslow, *Militärwissenschaft*, 140 f.
[1173] Koslow, *op. cit.*, 134, 135; cf. Sokolowski, *op. cit.*, 42, 43 f.
[1174] Sokolowski, *op. cit.*, 84; Skirdo, *The People*, 98.
[1175] See, e.g., Koslow, *Militärwissenschaft*, 140.
[1176] Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 47, 48.

For strategy is indeed supposed to be means and instrument for achieving the set political purposes, on the other hand however these purposes themselves must correspond to the available military capacities or the military must be provided with sufficient means to achieve the set purposes.[1177] Thus not only the conditionality of military strategy by political purposes becomes clear, but likewise the conditionality of political objective by military viewpoints—especially since "also the economy cannot develop nowadays without regard to strategic considerations".[1178] With reference to Engels[1179] it is therefore emphasized that "a violation of the laws of military strategy or an ignoring of these laws by politics can lead to the ruin of the army and to the defeat of the state. During a war strategic considerations frequently have also a repercussion on politics. It happens sometimes that the military factor attains decisive importance".[1180] It is obvious that the statement of the interaction between politics and strategy as well as that of the eventual independence of the military factor amounts to an upgrading of the role of the military.

Since Soviet military doctrine was built on the Leninist doctrine of the unity between politics and war (whereby it remains decisive that politics was conceived not as "moderation," but in its objective sense), it could resist the temptation to grant individual military-technical factors, namely the nuclear weapon, absolute priority, which would have meant a dogmatically unacceptable elimination of politics in favor of an allegedly non-political technology. Because of this relativizing attitude towards the nuclear weapon, the American logic of deterrence remained alien to the Soviets, which is based on the idea that a nuclear war is completely irrational and cannot be won.[1181] Beyond that they were able to avoid the mistake of underestimating the role of conventional armed forces in the nuclear age and fixing themselves on a basically inflexible concept of massive nuclear retaliation condemning to passivity. The viable compromise achieved in their military doctrine allowed them on the contrary, besides the expansion of the nuclear arsenal, to undertake a considerable strengthening and modernization of their conventional armed forces and thus to transition to the strategy of flexible response without time losses and also without breaks—although for propagandistic reasons they presented this transition not as their own concept, but as an answer to the analogous concept of

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[1177] Lomov, *Scientific-technical Progress*, 134; *Marxisme-Léninisme sur la guerre*, 33; Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 57 f.; Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, *Sowjetische Militärstrategie*, 251.
[1178] Sokolowski-Tscherednitschenko, *op. cit.*, 252.
[1179] See above, II, note 29.
[1180] Sokolowski, *Strategie*, 59 f. Cf. *Zav'jalov, Zum gegenwärtigen Stand*, 319: "the military-technical changes have an effect in a certain respect on the character of the military-political goals and tasks of the state and its armed forces in war and have the consequence that new elements appear in the mechanism by which policy influences military buildup as well as the methods of preparation for war and its conduct".
[1181] Lambeth, *How to think*, 109 f.

NATO.[1182] It is short-sighted to attribute the strengthening and modernization of Soviet conventional armed forces simply to the influence of a military lobby; to the civilian strategists of the party thinking in large contexts it is clear anyway that without strong conventional armed forces no rapid and effective intervention in planetary everyday events is possible as long as the nuclear apocalypse fails to appear. Conventional superiority procures the Soviet Union, however, yet another, no less important advantage: it allows it to start "peace campaigns" for the abolition of nuclear weapons at will and thus to force the opposing side politically-propagandistically into the defensive. Under present circumstances only the conventionally superior may become a preacher of peace—if of course peace and abolition or limitation of nuclear weapons are naively considered synonymous. There is therefore not the slightest doubt that the already old Soviet proposal for the abolition of all nuclear weapons is meant sincerely in view of the conventional superiority of the Soviets: whoever possesses a revolver and a knife must even call upon his enemy, if the latter has only a revolver in hand, to sign a joint declaration on the renunciation of possession and use of revolvers.

Soviet military doctrine crystallized at the beginning of the 1960s and has been repeatedly confirmed since then. It reflected the inner equilibrium and relative homogeneity which the Soviet ruling elite achieved in the late 1960s and the 1970s, and it formed moreover the military-theoretical basis of the admirable imperial effort of the Soviet Union in just the same period. It is not excluded that this military doctrine could modify considerably should the ruling elite split into openly mutually fighting groups, each of which had its own domestic and foreign policy objective. Whether such a split will occur or not will depend on the successes of the respective leadership, namely on the foreign policy ones at least as much as on those in the area of "internal reforms" etc. Every concrete prognosis must remain precarious, however. Planetary politics is still in its beginnings and it has not yet let all its unfolding possibilities come to light. Certain is in any case that it will intensify and sooner or later press for great decisions. Jesus named those to whom the kingdom of heaven will belong. The lords of the earth will be determined by the superior political and military strategists.

[1182] See, e.g., Tschujkow, *Landstreitkräfte*, 273 f.

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